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BURLEIGH AND HIS TIMES  
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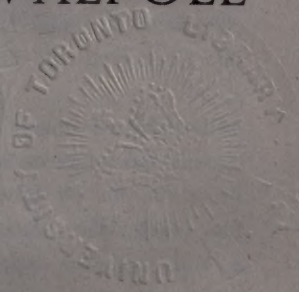
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BURLEIGH AND  
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BY  
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With an Introduction by  
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BURLEIGH AND

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## INTRODUCTION.

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THE three Essays in this volume show what Macaulay saw in a glance across the History of England, with special regard to the Reformation period; the Civil War period under the Stuarts; and the days after the English Revolution, in the time of the first Georges.

No two men form—or are meant to form—like judgments upon the course of struggle and change in a nation's policy. If anyone be out of accord with Lord Macaulay's offhand positiveness, and with the ready rhetoric that will not dull a brilliant sentence for all need there may be of shading in the picture of the truth it should express, he may, nevertheless, read with a full enjoyment. Nobody takes what he finds in any book as all that is to be found. Here we get the impression made by leading facts of history upon a man who was widely read, who forgot little that he read, and who, in expression of opinion upon what he read, was brilliantly clever.

The first of these Essays, on "Burleigh and his

Times," soon passes into a discussion of the spirit of the times under Elizabeth. With a useful glance at the French Revolution, it treats the Church Reformation as, in its way, a revolutionary movement, and discusses the relation of the People to the Crown under the Tudors. There may be here and there—I think there is—injustice done by judgment running to extremes; sometimes there may be an obvious forgetting of what were the bounds of opinion in Church matters three hundred years ago. But the Essay is one from which no reader can fail to draw both pleasure and instruction. Few men of his mark are open to so much criticism as Macaulay; but his mark is that of an English writer who had powers that will keep his books for ever fresh among his countrymen. He was a student and a scholar, liberal of mind and heart, who clearly conceived in his own thought what he had to say, and said it with the clear decision of a man without a doubt. In his own way Macaulay was a master; we may discuss his style as painters may discuss the style of a Titian or a Teniers, a Turner or a Claude; but we shall not think of him outside the rank of the great painters, now, or at any time hereafter.

The lively sketch of some chief features of our

Constitutional History under the rule of the Tudors, is followed by a sketch that, with a backward glance or two at days before the Tudors, and more reference to the Tudor times themselves, connects a view of English constitutional history under the Stuarts with a full and sympathetic outline of John Hampden's career.

Effect of contrast is obtained when the study of John Hampden is followed immediately by a contemptuous sketch of Horace Walpole, with which the third of these Essays begins. The contempt is too sweeping, although Horace Walpole brought it on himself; traits of character that would have modified it are omitted; and some that are dwelt upon might have been made more dependent on the temper and the fashion of the time. But Macaulay soon leaves Horace for his greater father, and brings his glance at English history to this side of the English Revolution, dwelling upon our political life when Sir Robert Walpole ruled, and ending with a lively notice of the Duke of Newcastle. Thus these three Essays follow in one course, and, put together, make a brilliant little book.

H. M.



# BURLEIGH AND HIS TIMES.

(APRIL, 1832.)

*Memoirs of the Life and Administration of the Right Honourable William Cecil Lord Burghley, Secretary of State in the Reign of King Edward the Sixth, and Lord High Treasurer of England in the Reign of Queen Elizabeth. Containing an Historical View of the Times in which he lived, and of the many eminent and illustrious Persons with whom he was connected; with Extracts from his Private and Official Correspondence and other Papers, now first published from the Originals.* By the Rev. EDWARD NARES, D.D., Regius Professor of Modern History in the University of Oxford. 3 vols. 4to. London: 1828, 1832.

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THE work of Dr. Nares has filled us with astonishment similar to that which Captain Lemuel Gulliver felt when first he landed in Brobdingnag and saw corn as high as the oaks in the New Forest, thimbles as large as buckets, and wrens of the bulk of turkeys. The whole book, and every component part of it, is on a gigantic scale. The title is as long as an ordinary preface, the prefatory matter would furnish out an ordinary book, and the book contains as much reading as an ordinary library. We cannot sum up the merits of the stupendous mass of paper which lies before us better than by saying that it consists of about two thousand closely printed quarto pages, that it occupies fifteen hundred inches cubic measure, and that it weighs

sixty pounds avoirdupois. Such a book might, before the Deluge, have been considered as light reading by Hilpa and Shalum; but, unhappily, the life of man is now threescore years and ten, and we cannot but think it somewhat unfair in Dr. Nares to demand from us so large a portion of so short an existence.

Compared with the labour of reading through these volumes, all other labour, the labour of thieves on the treadmill, of children in factories, of negroes in sugar plantations, is an agreeable recreation. There was, it is said, a criminal in Italy who was suffered to make his choice between Guicciardini and the galleys; he chose the history; but the War of Pisa was too much for him; he changed his mind, and went to the oar. Guicciardini, though certainly not the most amusing of writers, is a Herodotus or a Froissart when compared with Dr. Nares. It is not merely in bulk, but in specific gravity also, that these memoirs exceed all other human compositions. On every subject which the Professor discusses he produces three times as many pages as another man, and one of his pages is as tedious as another man's three. His book is swelled to its vast dimensions by endless repetitions, by episodes which have nothing to do with the main action, by quotations from books which are in every circulating library, and by reflections which, when they happen to be just, are so obvious that they must necessarily occur to the mind of every reader. He employs more words in expounding and defending a truism than any other writer



would employ in supporting a paradox. Of the rules of historical perspective he has not the faintest notion. There is neither foreground nor background in his delineation. The wars of Charles the Fifth in Germany are detailed at almost as much length as in Robertson's life of that prince. The troubles of Scotland are related as fully as in M'Crie's "Life of John Knox." It would be most unjust to deny that Dr. Nares is a man of great industry and research, but he is so utterly incompetent to arrange the materials which he has collected, that he might as well have left them in their original repositories.

Neither the facts which Dr. Nares has discovered, nor the arguments which he urges, will, we apprehend, materially alter the opinion generally entertained by judicious readers of history concerning his hero. Lord Burleigh can hardly be called a great man. He was not one of those whose genius and energy change the fate of empires; he was by nature and habit one of those who follow, not one of those who lead. Nothing that is recorded, either of his words or of his actions, indicates intellectual or moral elevation; but his talents, though not brilliant, were of an eminently useful kind, and his principles, though not inflexible, were not more relaxed than those of his associates and competitors. He had a cool temper, a sound judgment, great powers of application, and a constant eye to the main chance. In his youth he was, it seems, fond of practical jokes; yet even out of these he contrived to

extract some pecuniary profit. When he was studying the law at Gray's Inn he lost all his furniture and books at the gaming-table to one of his friends; he accordingly bored a hole in the wall which separated his chambers from those of his associate, and at midnight bellowed through this passage threats of damnation and calls to repentance in the ears of the victorious gambler, who lay sweating with fear all night, and refunded his winnings on his knees next day. "Many other the like merry jests," says his old biographer, "I have heard him tell, too long to be here noted." To the last Burleigh was somewhat jocose, and some of his sportive sayings have been recorded by Bacon; they show much more shrewdness than generosity, and are, indeed, neatly expressed reasons for exacting money rigorously, and for keeping it carefully. It must, however, be acknowledged that he was rigorous and careful for the public advantage as well as for his own. To extol his moral character as Dr. Nares has extolled it is absurd. It would be equally absurd to represent him as a corrupt, rapacious, and bad-hearted man. He paid great attention to the interests of the State, and great attention also to the interest of his own family. He never deserted his friends till it was very inconvenient to stand by them, was an excellent Protestant when it was not very advantageous to be a Papist, recommended a tolerant policy to his mistress as strongly as he could recommend it without hazarding her favour, never put to the rack any person from

whom it did not seem probable that useful information might be derived, and was so moderate in his desires that he left only three hundred distinct landed estates, though he might, as his honest servant assures us, have left much more "if he would have taken money out of the Exchequer for his own use, as many Treasurers have done."

Burleigh, like the old Marquess of Winchester, who preceded him in the custody of the White Staff, was of the willow, and not of the oak. He first rose into notice by defending the supremacy of Henry VIII. He was subsequently favoured and promoted by the Duke of Somerset. He not only contrived to escape unhurt when his patron fell, but became an important member of the administration of Northumberland. Dr. Nares assures us over and over again that there could have been nothing base in Cecil's conduct on this occasion; for, says he, Cecil continued to stand well with Cranmer. This, we confess, hardly satisfies us. We are much of the mind of Falstaff's tailor. We must have better assurance for Sir John than Bardolph's. We like not the security.

Through the whole course of that miserable intrigue which was carried on round the dying bed of Edward VI., Cecil so bemeaned himself as to avoid, first, the displeasure of Northumberland, and afterwards the displeasure of Mary. He was prudently unwilling to put his hand to the instrument which changed the course of the succession. But the furious Dudley was

master of the palace. Cecil, therefore, according to his own account, excused himself from signing as a party, but consented to sign as a witness. It is not easy to describe his dexterous conduct at this most perplexing crisis, in language more appropriate than that which is employed by old Fuller. "His hand wrote it as secretary of state," says that quaint writer; "but his heart consented not thereto. Yea, he openly opposed it; though at last yielding to the greatness of Northumberland, in an age when it was present drowning not to swim with the stream. But as the philosopher tells us, that, though the planets be whirled about about daily from east to west, by the motion of the *primum mobile*, yet have they also a contrary proper motion of their own from west to east, which they slowly, though surely, move at their leisure; so Cecil had secret counter-endeavours against the strain of the court herein, and privately advanced his rightful intentions against the foresaid duke's ambition."

This was undoubtedly the most perilous conjuncture of Cecil's life. - Wherever there was a safe course, he was safe. But here every course was full of danger. His situation rendered it impossible for him to be neutral. If he acted on either side, if he refused to act at all, he ran a fearful risk. He saw all the difficulties of his position. He sent his money and plate out of London, made over his estates to his son, and carried arms about his person. His best arms, however, were his sagacity and his self-command. The

plot in which he had been an unwilling accomplice ended, as it was natural that so odious and absurd a plot should end, in the ruin of its contrivers. In the meantime, Cecil quietly extricated himself, and, having been successively patronised by Henry, by Somerset, and by Northumberland, continued to flourish under the protection of Mary.

He had no aspirations after the crown of martyrdom. He confessed himself, therefore, with great decorum, heard mass in Wimbledon Church at Easter, and, for the better ordering of his spiritual concerns, took a priest into his house. Dr. Nares, whose simplicity passes that of any casuist with whom we are acquainted, vindicates his hero by assuring us that this was not superstition, but pure unmixed hypocrisy. "That he did in some manner conform, we shall not be able, in the face of existing documents, to deny; while we feel in our own minds abundantly satisfied, that, during this very trying reign, he never abandoned the prospect of another revolution in favour of Protestantism." In another place, the Doctor tells us that Cecil went to mass "with no idolatrous intention." Nobody, we believe, ever accused him of idolatrous intentions. The very ground of the charge against him is that he had no idolatrous intentions. We never should have blamed him if he had really gone to Wimbledon Church, with the feelings of a good Catholic, to worship the host. Dr. Nares speaks in several places with just severity of the sophistry of

the Jesuits, and with just admiration of the incomparable letters of Pascal. It is somewhat strange, therefore, that he should adopt, to the full extent, the jesuitical doctrine of the direction of intentions.

We do not blame Cecil for not choosing to be burnt. The deep stain upon his memory is that, for differences of opinion for which he would risk nothing himself, he in the day of his power took away without scruple the lives of others. One of the excuses suggested in these Memoirs for his conforming, during the reign of Mary, to the Church of Rome, is that he may have been of the same mind with those German Protestants who were called Adiaphorists, and who considered the popish rites as matters indifferent. Melancthon was one of these moderate persons, and "appears," says Dr. Nares, "to have gone greater lengths than any imputed to Lord Burleigh." We should have thought this not only an excuse, but a complete vindication, if Cecil had been an Adiaphorist for the benefit of others as well as for his own. If the popish rites were matters of so little moment that a good Protestant might lawfully practise them for his safety, how could it be just or humane that a Papist should be hanged, drawn, and quartered, for practising them from a sense of duty? Unhappily these non-essentials soon became matters of life and death. Just at the very time at which Cecil attained the highest point of power and favour, an Act of Parliament was passed by which the penalties of high treason were denounced against persons who

should do in sincerity what he had done from cowardice.

Early in the reign of Mary, Cecil was employed in a mission scarcely consistent with the character of a zealous Protestant. He was sent to escort the Papal Legate, Cardinal Pole, from Brussels to London. That great body of moderate persons who cared more for the quiet of the realm than for the controverted points which were in issue between the Churches, seem to have placed their chief hope in the wisdom and humanity of the gentle Cardinal. Cecil, it is clear, cultivated the friendship of Pole with great assiduity, and received great advantage from the Legate's protection.

But the best protection of Cecil, during the gloomy and disastrous reign of Mary, was that which he derived from his own prudence and from his own temper, a prudence which could never be lulled into carelessness, a temper which could never be irritated into rashness. The Papists could find no occasion against him. Yet he did not lose the esteem even of those sterner Protestants who had preferred exile to recantation. He attached himself to the persecuted heiress of the throne, and entitled himself to her gratitude and confidence. Yet he continued to receive marks of favour from the Queen. In the House of Commons, he put himself at the head of the party opposed to the Court. Yet, so guarded was his language that, even when some of those who acted

with him were imprisoned by the Privy Council, he escaped with impunity.

At length Mary died: Elizabeth succeeded; and Cecil rose at once to greatness. He was sworn in Privy-Councillor and Secretary of State to the new sovereign before he left her prison of Hatfield; and he continued to serve her during forty years, without intermission, in the highest employments. His abilities were precisely those which keep men long in power. He belonged to the class of the Walpoles, the Pelhams, and the Liverpools, not to that of the St. Johns, the Carterets, the Chathams, and the Cannings. If he had been a man of original genius and of an enterprising spirit, it would have been scarcely possible for him to keep his power or even his head. There was not room in one government for an Elizabeth and a Richelieu. What the haughty daughter of Henry needed, was a moderate, cautious, flexible minister, skilled in the details of business, competent to advise, but not aspiring to command. And such a minister she found in Burleigh. No arts could shake the confidence which she reposed in her old and trusty servant. The courtly graces of Leicester, the brilliant talents and accomplishments of Essex, touched the fancy, perhaps the heart, of the woman; but no rival could deprive the Treasurer of the place which he possessed in the favour of the Queen. She sometimes chid him sharply; but he was the man whom she delighted to honour. For Burleigh, she forgot her usual parsimony both of



wealth and of dignities. For Burleigh, she relaxed that severe etiquette to which she was unreasonably attached. Every other person to whom she addressed her speech, or on whom the glance of her eagle eye fell, instantly sank on his knee. For Burleigh alone, a chair was set in her presence; and there the old minister, by birth only a plain Lincolnshire esquire, took his ease, while the haughty heirs of the Fitzalans and the De Veres humbled themselves to the dust around him. At length, having survived all his early coadjutors and rivals, he died full of years and honours. His royal mistress visited him on his deathbed, and cheered him with assurances of her affection and esteem; and his power passed, with little diminution, to a son who inherited his abilities, and whose mind had been formed by his counsels.

The life of Burleigh was commensurate with one of the most important periods in the history of the world. It exactly measures the time during which the House of Austria held decided superiority, and aspired to universal dominion. In the year in which Burleigh was born Charles V. obtained the imperial crown. In the year in which Burleigh died, the vast designs which had, during near a century, kept Europe in constant agitation, were buried in the same grave with the proud and sullen Philip.

The life of Burleigh was commensurate also with the period during which a great moral revolution was effected—a revolution the consequences of which were

felt, not only in the cabinets of princes, but at half the firesides in Christendom. He was born when the great religious schism was just commencing. He lived to see that schism complete, and to see a line of demarcation, which, since his death, has been very little altered, strongly drawn between Protestant and Catholic Europe.

The only event of modern times which can be properly compared with the Reformation is the French Revolution, or, to speak more accurately, that great revolution of political feeling which took place in almost every part of the civilised world during the eighteenth century, and which obtained in France its most terrible and signal triumph. Each of these memorable events may be described as a rising up of the human reason against a caste. The one was a struggle of the laity against the clergy for intellectual liberty; the other was a struggle of the people against princes and nobles for political liberty. In both cases the spirit of innovation was at first encouraged by the class to which it was likely to be most prejudicial. It was under the patronage of Frederic, of Catherine, of Joseph, and of the grandees of France, that the philosophy which afterwards threatened all the thrones and aristocracies of Europe with destruction first became formidable. The ardour with which men betook themselves to liberal studies, at the close of the fifteenth and the beginning of the sixteenth century, was zealously encouraged by the heads of that very Church

to which liberal studies were destined to be fatal. In both cases, when the explosion came, it came with a violence which appalled and disgusted many of those who had previously been distinguished by the freedom of their opinions. The violence of the democratic party in France made Burke a Tory and Alfieri a courtier. The violence of the chiefs of the German schism made Erasmus a defender of abuses, and turned the author of *Utopia* into a persecutor. In both cases, the convulsion which had overthrown deeply-seated errors shook all the principles on which society rests to their very foundations. The minds of men were unsettled. It seemed for a time that all order and morality were about to perish with the prejudices with which they had been long and intimately associated. Frightful cruelties were committed. Immense masses of property were confiscated. Every part of Europe swarmed with exiles. In moody and turbulent spirits zeal soured into malignity, or foamed into madness. From the political agitation of the eighteenth century sprang the Jacobins. From the religious agitation of the sixteenth century sprang the Anabaptists. The partisans of Robespierre robbed and murdered in the name of fraternity and equality. The followers of Kniperdoling robbed and murdered in the name of Christian liberty. The feeling of patriotism was, in many parts of Europe, almost wholly extinguished. All the old maxims of foreign policy were changed. Physical boundaries were superseded by moral boundaries.

Nations made war on each other with new arms—with arms which no fortifications, however strong by Nature or by art, could resist—with arms before which rivers parted like the Jordan, and ramparts fell down like the walls of Jericho. The great masters of fleets and armies were often reduced to confess, like Milton's warlike angel, how hard they found it

“To exclude  
Spiritual substance with corporeal bar.”

Europe was divided, as Greece had been divided during the period concerning which Thucydides wrote. The conflict was not, as it is in ordinary times, between state and state, but between two omnipresent factions, each of which was in some places dominant and in other places oppressed, but which, openly or covertly, carried on their strife in the bosom of every society. No man asked whether another belonged to the same country with himself, but whether he belonged to the same sect. Party spirit seemed to justify and consecrate acts which in any other times would have been considered as the foulest of treasons. The French emigrant saw nothing disgraceful in bringing Austrian and Prussian hussars to Paris. The Irish or Italian democrat saw no impropriety in serving the French Directory against his own native Government. So, in the sixteenth century, the fury of theological factions suspended all national animosities and jealousies. The Spaniards were invited into France by the League; the English were invited into France by the Huguenots.

We by no means intend to underrate or to palliate the crimes and excesses which, during the last generation, were produced by the spirit of democracy. But, when we hear men zealous for the Protestant religion constantly represent the French Revolution as radically and essentially evil on account of those crimes and excesses, we cannot but remember that the deliverance of our ancestors from the house of their spiritual bondage was effected "by plagues and by signs, by wonders and by war." We cannot but remember that, as in the case of the French Revolution, so also in the case of the Reformation, those who rose up against tyranny were themselves deeply tainted with the vices which tyranny engenders. We cannot but remember that libels scarcely less scandalous than those of Hebert, mummeries scarcely less absurd than those of Cloutz, and crimes scarcely less atrocious than those of Marat, disgrace the early history of Protestantism. The Reformation is an event long past. That volcano has spent its rage. The wide waste produced by its outbreak is forgotten. The landmarks which were swept away have been replaced. The ruined edifices have been repaired. The lava has covered with a rich incrustation the fields which it once devastated, and, after having turned a beautiful and fruitful garden into a desert, has again turned the desert into a still more beautiful and fruitful garden. The second great eruption is not yet over. The marks of its ravages are still all around us. The ashes are still hot beneath our feet,

In some directions the deluge of fire still continues to spread. Yet experience surely entitles us to believe that this explosion, like that which preceded it, will fertilise the soil which it has devastated. Already, in those parts which have suffered most severely, rich cultivation and secure dwellings have begun to appear amidst the waste. The more we read of the history of past ages, the more we observe the signs of our own times, the more do we feel our hearts filled and swelled up by a good hope for the future destinies of the human race.

The history of the Reformation in England is full of strange problems. The most prominent and extraordinary phenomenon which it presents to us is the gigantic strength of the government contrasted with the feebleness of the religious parties. During the twelve or thirteen years which followed the death of Henry VIII., the religion of the State was thrice changed. Protestantism was established by Edward; the Catholic Church was restored by Mary; Protestantism was again established by Elizabeth. The faith of the nation seemed to depend on the personal inclinations of the sovereign. Nor was this all. An Established Church was then, as a matter of course, a persecuting Church. Edward persecuted Catholics. Mary persecuted Protestants. Elizabeth persecuted Catholics again. The father of those three sovereigns had enjoyed the pleasure of persecuting both sects at once, and had sent to death, on the same hurdle, the

heretic who denied the real presence, and the traitor who denied the royal supremacy. There was nothing in England like that fierce and bloody opposition which, in France, each of the religious factions in its turn offered to the Government. We had neither a Coligny nor a Mayenne, neither a Moncontour nor an Ivry. No English city braved sword and famine for the reformed doctrines with the spirit of Rochelle, or for the Catholic doctrines with the spirit of Paris. Neither sect in England formed a League. Neither sect extorted a recantation from the sovereign. Neither sect could obtain from an adverse sovereign even a toleration. The English Protestants, after several years of domination, sank down with scarcely a struggle under the tyranny of Mary. The Catholics, after having regained and abused their old ascendancy, submitted patiently to the severe rule of Elizabeth. Neither Protestants nor Catholics engaged in any great and well-organised scheme of resistance. A few wild and tumultuous risings, suppressed as soon as they appeared; a few dark conspiracies, in which only a small number of desperate men engaged—such were the utmost efforts made by these two parties to assert the most sacred of human rights, attacked by the most odious tyranny.

The explanation of these circumstances which has generally been given is very simple, but by no means satisfactory. The power of the Crown, it is said, was then at its height, and was in fact despotic. This

solution, we own, seems to us to be no solution at all. It has long been the fashion—a fashion introduced by Mr. Hume—to describe the English monarchy in the sixteenth century as an absolute monarchy. And such undoubtedly it appears to a superficial observer. Elizabeth, it is true, often spoke to her parliaments in language as haughty and imperious as that which the Great Turk would use to his divan. She punished with great severity members of the House of Commons who, in her opinion, carried the freedom of debate too far. She assumed the power of legislating by means of proclamations. She imprisoned her subjects without bringing them to a legal trial. Torture was often employed, in defiance of the laws of England, for the purpose of extorting confessions from those who were shut up in her dungeons. The authority of the Star Chamber and of the Ecclesiastical Commission was at its highest point. Severe restraints were imposed on political and religious discussion. The number of presses was at one time limited. No man could print without a licence; and every work had to undergo the scrutiny of the Primate, or the Bishop of London. Persons whose writings were displeasing to the Court were cruelly mutilated, like Stubbs, or put to death, like Penry. Nonconformity was severely punished. The Queen prescribed the exact rule of religious faith and discipline; and whoever departed from that rule, either to the right or to the left, was in danger of severe penalties.



Such was this government. Yet we know that it was loved by the great body of those who lived under it. We know that, during the fierce contests of the sixteenth century, both the hostile parties spoke of the time of Elizabeth as of a golden age. That great Queen has now been lying two hundred and thirty years in Henry VII.'s Chapel. Yet her memory is still dear to the hearts of a free people.

The truth seems to be that the government of the Tudors was, with a few occasional deviations, a popular government, under the forms of despotism. At first sight it may seem that the prerogatives of Elizabeth were not less ample than those of Louis XIV., and her parliaments were as obsequious as his parliaments—that her warrant had as much authority as his *lettre-de-cachet*. The extravagance with which her courtiers eulogised her personal and mental charms went beyond the adulation of Boileau and Molière. Louis would have blushed to receive from those who composed the gorgeous circles of Marli and Versailles such outward marks of servitude as the haughty Britoness exacted of all who approached her. But the authority of Louis rested on the support of his army. The authority of Elizabeth rested solely on the support of her people. Those who say that her power was absolute do not sufficiently consider in what her power consisted. Her power consisted in the willing obedience of her subjects, in their attachment to her person and to her office, in their respect for the old line

from which she sprang, in their sense of the general security which they enjoyed under her government. These were the means, and the only means, which she had at her command for carrying her decrees into execution, for resisting foreign enemies, and for crushing domestic treason. There was not a ward in the city, there was not a hundred in any shire in England, which could not have overpowered the handful of armed men who composed her household. If a hostile sovereign threatened invasion, if an ambitious noble raised the standard of revolt, she could have recourse only to the trainbands of her capital and the array of her counties, to the citizens and yeomen of England, commanded by the merchants and esquires of England.

Thus, when intelligence arrived of the vast preparations which Philip was making for the subjugation of the realm, the first person to whom the Government thought of applying for assistance was the Lord Mayor of London. They sent to ask him what force the City would engage to furnish for the defence of the kingdom against the Spaniards. The Mayor and Common Council, in return, desired to know what force the Queen's Highness wished them to furnish. The answer was, fifteen ships and five thousand men. The Londoners deliberated on the matter, and, two days after, "humbly intreated the council, in sign of their perfect love and loyalty to prince and country, to accept ten thousand men and thirty ships amply furnished."

People who could give such signs as these of their

loyalty were by no means to be misgoverned with impunity. The English in the sixteenth century were, beyond all doubt, a free people. They had not, indeed, the outward show of freedom; but they had the reality. They had not as good a Constitution as we have; but they had that without which the best Constitution is as useless as the king's proclamation against vice and immorality, that which, without any Constitution, keeps rulers in awe, force, and the spirit to use it. Parliaments, it is true, were rarely held, and were not very respectfully treated. The Great Charter was often violated. But the people had a security against gross and systematic misgovernment, far stronger than all the parchment that was ever marked with the sign manual; and than all the wax that was ever pressed by the Great Seal.

It is a common error in politics to confound means with ends. Constitutions, charters, petitions of right, declarations of right, representative assemblies, electoral colleges are not good government; nor do they, even when most elaborately constructed, necessarily produce good government. Laws exist in vain for those who have not the courage and the means to defend them. Electors meet in vain where want makes them the slaves of the landlord, or where superstition makes them the slaves of the priest. Representative assemblies sit in vain unless they have at their command, in the last resort, the physical power which is

necessary to make their deliberations free and their votes effectual.

The Irish are better represented in Parliament than the Scotch, who, indeed, are not represented at all. But are the Irish better governed than the Scotch? Surely not. This circumstance has of late been used as an argument against reform. It proves nothing against reform. It proves only this, that laws have no magical, no supernatural virtue; that laws do not act like Aladdin's lamp or Prince Ahmed's apple; that priestcraft, that ignorance, that the rage of contending factions may make good institutions useless; that intelligence, sobriety, industry, moral freedom, firm union may supply in a great measure the defects of the worst representative system. A people whose education and habits are such that, in every quarter of the world, they rise above the mass of those with whom they mix, as surely as oil rises to the top of water, a people of such temper and self-government that the wildest popular excesses recorded in their history partake of the gravity of judicial proceedings and of the solemnity of religious rites, a people whose national pride and mutual attachment have passed into a proverb, a people whose high and fierce spirit, so forcibly described in the haughty motto which encircles their thistle, preserved their independence, during a struggle of centuries, from the encroachments of wealthier and more powerful neighbours, such a people cannot be long oppressed. Any government, however constituted,

must respect their wishes and tremble at their discontents. It is, indeed, most desirable that such a people should exercise a direct influence on the conduct of affairs, and should make their wishes known through constitutional organs. But some influence, direct or indirect, they will assuredly possess. Some organ, constitutional or unconstitutional, they will assuredly find. They will be better governed under a good constitution than under a bad constitution. But they will be better governed under the worst constitution than some other nations under the best. In any general classification of constitutions, the Constitution of Scotland must be reckoned as one of the worst, perhaps as the worst, in Christian Europe. Yet the Scotch are not ill-governed. And the reason is simply that they will not bear to be ill-governed.

In some of the Oriental monarchies, in Afghanistan for example, though there exists nothing which an European publicist would call a Constitution, the sovereign generally governs in conformity with certain rules established for the public benefit; and the sanction of those rules is that every Afghan approves them, and that every Afghan is a soldier.

The monarchy of England in the sixteenth century was a monarchy of this kind. It is called an absolute monarchy, because little respect was paid by the Tudors to those institutions which we have been accustomed to consider as the sole checks on the power of the sovereign. A modern Englishman can hardly understand

how the people can have had any real security for good government under kings who levied benevolences, and chid the House of Commons as they would have chid a pack of dogs. People do not sufficiently consider that, though the legal checks were feeble, the natural checks were strong. There was one great and effectual limitation on the royal authority, the knowledge that, if the patience of the nation were severely tried, the nation would put forth its strength, and that its strength would be found irresistible. If a large body of Englishmen became thoroughly discontented, instead of presenting requisitions, holding large meetings, passing resolutions, signing petitions, forming associations and unions, they rose up; they took their halberds and their bows; and, if the sovereign was not sufficiently popular to find among his subjects other halberds and other bows to oppose to the rebels, nothing remained for him but a repetition of the horrible scenes of Berkeley and Pomfret. He had no regular army which could, by its superior arms and its superior skill, overawe or vanquish the sturdy Commons of his realm, abounding in the native hardihood of Englishmen, and trained in the simple discipline of the militia.

It has been said that the Tudors were as absolute as the Cæsars. Never was parallel so unfortunate. The government of the Tudors was the direct opposite to the government of Augustus and his successors. The Cæsars ruled despotically, by means of a great

standing army, under the decent forms of a Republican Constitution. They called themselves citizens. They mixed unceremoniously with other citizens. In theory they were only the elective magistrates of a free commonwealth. Instead of arrogating to themselves despotic power, they acknowledged allegiance to the Senate. They were merely the lieutenants of that venerable body. They mixed in debate. They even appeared as advocates before the courts of law. Yet they could safely indulge in the wildest freaks of cruelty and rapacity, while their legions remained faithful. Our Tudors, on the other hand, under the titles and forms of monarchical supremacy, were essentially popular magistrates. They had no means of protecting themselves against the public hatred; and they were therefore compelled to court the public favour. To enjoy all the State and all the personal indulgences of absolute power, to be adored with Oriental prostrations, to dispose at will of the liberty and even of the life of ministers and courtiers, this the nation granted to the Tudors. But the condition on which they were suffered to be the tyrants of Whitehall was that they should be the mild and paternal sovereigns of England. They were under the same restraints with regard to their people under which a military despot is placed with regard to his army. They would have found it as dangerous to grind their subjects with cruel taxation as Nero would have found it to leave his prætorians unpaid. Those who imme-

diately surrounded the royal person, and engaged in the hazardous game of ambition, were exposed to the most fearful dangers. Buckingham, Cromwell, Surrey, Seymour of Sudely, Somerset, Northumberland, Suffolk, Norfolk, Essex, perished on the scaffold. But in general the country gentleman hunted and the merchant traded in peace. Even Henry, as cruel as Domitian, but far more politic, contrived, while reeking with the blood of the Lamiaë, to be a favourite with the cobblers.

The Tudors committed very tyrannical acts. But in their ordinary dealings with the people they were not, and could not safely be, tyrants. Some excesses were easily pardoned. For the nation was proud of the high and fiery blood of its magnificent princes, and saw, in many proceedings which a lawyer would even then have condemned, the outbreak of the same noble spirit which so manfully hurled foul scorn at Parma and at Spain. But to this endurance there was a limit. If the Government ventured to adopt measures which the people really felt to be oppressive, it was soon compelled to change its course. When Henry VIII. attempted to raise a forced loan of unusual amount by proceedings of unusual rigour, the opposition which he encountered was such as appalled even his stubborn and imperious spirit. The people, we are told, said that if they were treated thus, "then were it worse than the taxes of France; and England should be bound, and not free." The county of Suffolk rose in arms. The King prudently yielded to an opposition



which, if he had persisted, would, in all probability, have taken the form of a general rebellion. Towards the close of the reign of Elizabeth the people felt themselves aggrieved by the monopolies. The Queen, proud and courageous as she was, shrank from a contest with the nation, and, with admirable sagacity, conceded all that her subjects had demanded, while it was yet in her power to concede with dignity and grace.

It cannot be imagined that a people who had in their own hands the means of checking their princes, would suffer any prince to impose upon them a religion generally detested. It is absurd to suppose that, if the nation had been decidedly attached to the Protestant faith, Mary could have re-established the Papal supremacy. It is equally absurd to suppose that, if the nation had been zealous for the ancient religion, Elizabeth could have restored the Protestant Church. The truth is that the people were not disposed to engage in a struggle either for the new or for the old doctrines. Abundance of spirit was shown when it seemed likely that Mary would resume her father's grants of Church property, or that she would sacrifice the interests of England to the husband whom she regarded with unmerited tenderness. That Queen found that it would be madness to attempt the restoration of the abbey lands. She found that her subjects would never suffer her to make her hereditary kingdom a fief of Castile. On these points she encountered a steady resistance, and was compelled to give way. If

she was able to establish the Catholic worship and to persecute those who would not conform to it, it was evidently because the people cared far less for the Protestant religion than for the rights of property and for the independence of the English crown. In plain words, they did not think the difference between the hostile sects worth a struggle. There was undoubtedly a zealous Protestant party and a zealous Catholic party. But both these parties were, we believe, very small. We doubt whether both together made up, at the time of Mary's death, the twentieth part of the nation. The remaining nineteen-twentieths halted between the two opinions, and were not disposed to risk a revolution in the Government, for the purpose of giving to either of the extreme factions an advantage over the other.

We possess no data which will enable us to compare with exactness the force of the two sects. Mr. Butler asserts that, even at the accession of James I., a majority of the population of England were Catholics. This is pure assertion, and is not only unsupported by evidence, but, we think, completely disproved by the strongest evidence. Dr. Lingard is of opinion that the Catholics were one-half of the nation in the middle of the reign of Elizabeth. Rushton says that when Elizabeth came to the throne, the Catholics were two-thirds of the nation, and the Protestants only one-third. The most judicious and impartial of English historians, Mr. Hallam, is, on the contrary, of opinion that two-thirds were Protestants, and only one-third Catholics.

To us, we must confess, it seems incredible that, if the Protestants were really two to one, they should have borne the Government of Mary, or that, if the Catholics were really two to one, they should have borne the Government of Elizabeth. We are at a loss to conceive how a sovereign who has no standing army, and whose power rests solely on the loyalty of his subjects, can continue for years to persecute a religion to which the majority of his subjects are sincerely attached. In fact, the Protestants did rise up against one sister, and the Catholics against the other. Those risings clearly showed how small and feeble both the parties were. Both in the one case and in the other the nation ranged itself on the side of the Government, and the insurgents were speedily put down and punished. The Kentish gentlemen who took up arms for the Reformed doctrines against Mary, and the great Northern Earls who displayed the banner of the Five Wounds against Elizabeth, were alike considered, by the great body of their countrymen, as wicked disturbers of the public peace.

The account which Cardinal Bentivoglio gave of the state of religion in England well deserves consideration. The zealous Catholics he reckoned at one-thirtieth part of the nation. The people who would without the least scruple become Catholics, if the Catholic religion were established, he estimated at four-fifths of the nation. We believe this account to have been very near the truth. We believe that the people

whose minds were made up on either side, who were inclined to make any sacrifice or run any risk for either religion, were very few. Each side had a few enterprising champions and a few stout-hearted martyrs, but the nation, undetermined in its opinions and feelings, resigned itself implicitly to the guidance of the Government, and lent to the sovereign for the time being an equally ready aid against either of the extreme parties.

We are very far from saying that the English of that generation were irreligious. They held firmly those doctrines which are common to the Catholic and to the Protestant theology. But they had no fixed opinion as to the matters in dispute between the churches. They were in a situation resembling that of those Borderers whom Sir Walter Scott has described with so much spirit—

“Who sought the beeves that made their broth  
In England and in Scotland both.”

And who

“—— nine times outlawed had been  
By England's King and Scotland's Queen.”

They were sometimes Protestants, sometimes Catholics: sometimes half Protestants, half Catholics.

The English had not for ages been bigoted Papists. In the fourteenth century, the first and perhaps the greatest of the Reformers, John Wickliffe, had stirred the public mind to its inmost depths. During the same century a scandalous schism in the Catholic

Church had diminished in many parts of Europe the reverence in which the Roman Pontiffs were held. It is clear that a hundred years before the time of Luther a great party in this kingdom was eager for a change at least as extensive as that which was subsequently effected by Henry VIII. The House of Commons, in the reign of Henry IV., proposed a confiscation of ecclesiastical property, more sweeping and violent even than that which took place under the administration of Thomas Cromwell, and, though defeated in this attempt, they succeeded in depriving the clerical order of some of its most oppressive privileges. The splendid conquests of Henry V. turned the attention of the nation from domestic reform. The Council of Constance removed some of the grossest of those scandals which had deprived the Church of the public respect. The authority of that venerable synod propped up the sinking authority of the Popedom. A considerable reaction took place. It cannot, however, be doubted that there was still some concealed Lollardism in England, or that many who did not absolutely dissent from any doctrine held by the Church of Rome were jealous of the wealth and power enjoyed by her ministers. At the very beginning of the reign of Henry VIII. a struggle took place between the clergy and the courts of law, in which the courts of law remained victorious. One of the bishops on that occasion declared that the common people entertained the strongest prejudices against his order, and that a

clergyman had no chance of fair play before a lay tribunal. The London juries, he said, entertained such a spite to the Church that, if Abel were a priest, they would find him guilty of the murder of Cain. This was said a few months before the time when Martin Luther began to preach at Wittenburg against indulgences.

As the Reformation did not find the English bigoted Papists, so neither was it conducted in such a manner as to make them zealous Protestants. It was not under the direction of men like that fiery Saxon who swore that he would go to Worms, though he had to face as many devils as there were tiles on the houses, or like that brave Switzer who was struck down while praying in front of the ranks of Zurich. No preacher of religion had the same power here which Calvin had at Geneva and Knox in Scotland. The Government put itself early at the head of the movement, and thus acquired power to regulate, and occasionally to arrest, the movement.

To many persons it appears extraordinary that Henry VIII. should have been able to maintain himself so long in an intermediate position between the Catholic and Protestant parties. Most extraordinary it would indeed be if we were to suppose that the nation consisted of none but decided Catholics and decided Protestants. The fact is that the great mass of the people was neither Catholic nor Protestant, but was, like its sovereign, midway between the two sects.

Henry, in that very part of his conduct which has been represented as most capricious and inconsistent, was probably following a policy far more pleasing to the majority of his subjects than a policy like that of Edward, or a policy like that of Mary, would have been. Down even to the very close of the reign of Elizabeth the people were in a state somewhat resembling that in which, as Machiavelli says, the inhabitants of the Roman Empire were, during the transition from heathenism to Christianity: "sendo la maggior parte di loro incerti a quale Dio dovessero ricorrere." They were generally, we think, favourable to the royal supremacy. They disliked the policy of the Court of Rome. Their spirit rose against the interference of a foreign priest with their national concerns. The bull which pronounced sentence of deposition against Elizabeth, the plots which were formed against her life, the usurpation of her titles by the Queen of Scotland, the hostility of Philip, excited their strongest indignation. The cruelties of Bonner were remembered with disgust. Some parts of the new system, the use of the English language, for example, in public worship, and the communion in both kinds, were undoubtedly popular. On the other hand, the early lessons of the nurse and the priest were not forgotten. The ancient ceremonies were long remembered with affectionate reverence. A large portion of the ancient theology lingered to the last in the minds which had been imbued with it in childhood.

The best proof that the religion of the people was of this mixed kind is furnished by the drama of that age. No man would bring unpopular opinions prominently forward in a play intended for representation. And we may safely conclude that feelings and opinions which pervade the whole dramatic literature of a generation, are feelings and opinions of which the men of that generation generally partook.

The greatest and most popular dramatists of the Elizabethan age treat religious subjects in a very remarkable manner. They speak respectfully of the fundamental doctrines of Christianity. But they speak neither like Catholics nor like Protestants, but like persons who are wavering between the two systems, or who have made a system for themselves out of parts selected from both. They seem to hold some of the Romish rites and doctrines in high respect. They treat the vow of celibacy, for example, so tempting, and, in later times, so common a subject for ribaldry, with mysterious reverence. Almost every member of a religious order whom they introduce is a holy and venerable man. We remember in their plays nothing resembling the coarse ridicule with which the Catholic religion and its ministers were assailed two generations later, by dramatists who wished to please the multitude. We remember no Friar Dominic, no Father Foigard, among the characters drawn by those great poets. The scene at the close of the *Knight of Malta* might have been written by a fervent Catholic.



Massinger shows a great fondness for ecclesiastics of the Romish Church, and has even gone so far as to bring a virtuous and interesting Jesuit on the stage. Ford, in that fine play which it is painful to read and scarcely decent to name, assigns a highly creditable part to the Friar. The partiality of Shakspeare for Friars is well known. In *Hamlet*, the Ghost complains that he died without extreme unction, and, in defiance of the article which condemns the doctrine of purgatory, declares that he is

“—— confined to fast in fires,  
Till the foul crimes, done in his days of nature,  
Are burnt and purged away.”

These lines, we suspect, would have raised a tremendous storm in the theatre at any time during the reign of Charles II. They were clearly not written by a zealous Protestant, or for zealous Protestants. Yet the author of *King John* and *Henry VIII.* was surely no friend to Papal supremacy.

There is, we think, only one solution of the phenomena which we find in the history and in the drama of that age. The religion of the English was a mixed religion, like that of the Samaritan settlers described in the Second Book of Kings, who “feared the Lord, and served their graven images;” like that of the Judaising Christians who blended the ceremonies and doctrines of the synagogue with those of the Church; like that of the Mexican Indians, who, during many generations after the subjugation of their race, con-

tinued to unite with the rites learned from their conquerors the worship of the grotesque idols which had been adored by Montezuma and Guatemozin.

These feelings were not confined to the populace. Elizabeth herself was by no means exempt from them. A crucifix, with wax lights burning round it, stood in her private chapel. She always spoke with disgust and anger of the marriage of priests. "I was in horror," says Archbishop Parker, "to hear such words to come from her mild nature and Christian learned conscience as she spake concerning God's holy ordinance and institution of matrimony." Burleigh prevailed on her to connive at the marriages of churchmen. But she would only connive; and the children sprung from such marriages were illegitimate till the accession of James I.

That which is, as we have said, the great stain on the character of Burleigh is also the great stain on the character of Elizabeth. Being herself an Adiaphorist, having no scruple about conforming to the Romish Church when conformity was necessary to her own safety, retaining to the last moment of her life a fondness for much of the doctrine and much of the ceremonial of that Church, she yet subjected that Church to a persecution even more odious than the persecution with which her sister had harassed the Protestants; we say more odious, for Mary had at least the plea of fanaticism. She did nothing for her religion which she was not prepared to suffer for it. She had held it

firmly under persecution. She fully believed it to be essential to salvation. If she burned the bodies of her subjects, it was in order to rescue their souls. Elizabeth had no such pretext. In opinion, she was little more than half a Protestant. She had professed, when it suited her, to be wholly a Catholic. There is an excuse, a wretched excuse, for the massacres of Piedmont, and the *Autos da fé* of Spain. But what can be said in defence of a ruler who is at once indifferent and intolerant?

If the great Queen, whose memory is still held in just veneration by Englishmen, had possessed sufficient virtue and sufficient enlargement of mind to adopt those principles which More, wiser in speculation than in action, had avowed in the preceding generation, and by which the excellent L'Hospital regulated his conduct in her own time, how different would be the colour of the whole history of the last two hundred and fifty years! She had the happiest opportunity ever vouchsafed to any sovereign of establishing perfect freedom of conscience throughout her dominions without danger to her Government, without scandal to any large party among her subjects. The nation, as it was clearly ready to profess either religion, would, beyond all doubt, have been ready to tolerate both. Unhappily for her own glory and for the public peace, she adopted a policy from the effects of which the Empire is still suffering. The yoke of the Established Church was pressed down on the people till they would bear it

no longer. Then a reaction came; another reaction followed. To the tyranny of the Establishment succeeded the tumultuous conflict of sects, infuriated by manifold wrongs, and drunk with unwonted freedom. To the conflict of sects succeeded again the cruel domination of one persecuting Church. At length oppression put off its most horrible form, and took a milder aspect. The penal laws which had been framed for the protection of the Established Church were abolished. But exclusions and disabilities still remained. These exclusions and disabilities, after having generated the most fearful discontents, after having rendered all government in one part of the kingdom impossible, after having brought the State to the very brink of ruin, have in our times been removed, but though removed, have left behind them a rankling which may last for many years. It is melancholy to think with what ease Elizabeth might have united all conflicting sects under the shelter of the same impartial laws, and the same paternal throne, and thus have placed the nation in the same situation, as far as the rights of conscience are concerned, in which we at last stand, after all the heart-burnings, the persecutions, the conspiracies, the seditions, the revolutions, the judicial murders, the civil wars, of ten generations.

This is the dark side of her character. Yet she surely was a great woman. Of all the sovereigns who exercised a power which was seemingly absolute, but which, in fact, depended for support on the love and

confidence of their subjects, she was by far the most illustrious. It has often been alleged as an excuse for the misgovernment of her successors that they only followed her example, that precedents might be found in the transactions of her reign for persecuting the Puritans, for levying money without the sanction of the House of Commons, for confining men without bringing them to trial, for interfering with the liberty of Parliamentary debate. All this may be true. But it is no good plea for her successors; and for this plain reason, that they were her successors. She governed one generation, they governed another; and between the two generations there was almost as little in common as between the people of two different countries. It was not by looking at the particular measures which Elizabeth had adopted, but by looking at the great general principles of her Government, that those who followed her were likely to learn the art of managing untractable subjects. If, instead of searching the records of her reign for precedents which might seem to vindicate the mutilation of Prynne and the imprisonment of Eliot, the Stuarts had attempted to discover the fundamental rules which guided her conduct in all her dealings with her people, they would have perceived that their policy was then most unlike to hers, when to a superficial observer it would have seemed most to resemble hers. Firm, haughty, sometimes unjust and cruel, in her proceedings towards individuals or towards small parties, she avoided with

care, or retracted with speed, every measure which seemed likely to alienate the great mass of the people. She gained more honour and more love by the manner in which she repaired her errors than she would have gained by never committing errors. If such a man as Charles I. had been in her place when the whole nation was crying out against the monopolies, he would have refused all redress. He would have dissolved the Parliament, and imprisoned the most popular members. He would have called another Parliament. He would have given some vague and delusive promises of relief in return for subsidies. When entreated to fulfil his promises, he would have again dissolved Parliament, and again imprisoned his leading opponents. The country would have become more agitated than before. The next House of Commons would have been more unmanageable than that which preceded it. The tyrant would have agreed to all that the nation demanded. He would have solemnly ratified an Act abolishing monopolies for ever. He would have received a large supply in return for this concession; and within half a year new patents, more oppressive than those which had been cancelled, would have been issued by scores. Such was the policy which brought the heir of a long line of kings, in early youth the darling of his countrymen, to a prison and a scaffold.

Elizabeth, before the House of Commons could address her, took out of their mouths the words which

they were about to utter in the name of the nation. Her promises went beyond their desires. Her performance followed close upon her promise. She did not treat the nation as an adverse party, as a party which had an interest opposed to hers, as a party to which she was to grant as few advantages as possible, and from which she was to extort as much money as possible. Her benefits were given, not sold; and, when once given, they were never withdrawn. She gave them too with a frankness, an effusion of heart, a princely dignity, a motherly tenderness, which enhanced their value. They were received by the sturdy country gentlemen who had come up to Westminster full of resentment, with tears of joy, and shouts of "God save the Queen." Charles I. gave up half the prerogatives of his crown to the Commons; and the Commons sent him in return the Grand Remonstrance.

We had intended to say something concerning that illustrious group of which Elizabeth is the central figure, that group which the last of the bards saw in vision from the top of Snowdon, encircling the Virgin Queen—

“——— many a baron bold,  
And gorgeous dames, and statesmen old  
In bearded majesty.”

We had intended to say something concerning the dexterous Walsingham, the impetuous Oxford, the graceful Sackville, the all-accomplished Sydney; concerning Essex, the ornament of the Court and of the

camp, the model of chivalry, the munificent patron of genius, whom great virtues, great courage, great talents, the favour of his sovereign, the love of his countrymen, all that seemed to insure a happy and glorious life, led to an early and an ignominious death; concerning Raleigh, the soldier, the sailor, the scholar, the courtier, the orator, the poet, the historian, the philosopher, whom we picture to ourselves sometimes reviewing the Queen's guard, sometimes giving chase to a Spanish galleon, then answering the chiefs of the country party in the House of Commons, then again murmuring one of his sweet love-songs too near the ears of her Highness's maids of honour, and soon after pouring over the Talmud, or collating Polybius with Livy. We had intended also to say something concerning the literature of that splendid period, and especially concerning those two incomparable men, the Prince of Poets and the Prince of Philosophers, who have made the Elizabethan age a more glorious and important era in the history of the human mind than the age of Pericles, of Augustus, or of Leo. But subjects so vast require a space far larger than we can at present afford. We therefore stop here, fearing that, if we proceed, our article may swell to a bulk exceeding that of all other reviews, as much as Dr. Nares's book exceeds the bulk of all other histories.



# JOHN HAMPDEN.

(DECEMBER, 1831.)

*Some Memorials of John Hampden, his Party, and his Times.*  
By LORD NUGENT. 2 vols. 8vo. London: 1831.



WE have read this book with great pleasure, though not exactly with that kind of pleasure which we had expected. We had hoped that Lord Nugent would have been able to collect, from family papers and local traditions, much new and interesting information respecting the life and character of the renowned leader of the Long Parliament, the first of those great English commoners, whose plain addition of "Mr." has, to our ears, a more majestic sound than the proudest of the feudal titles. In this hope we have been disappointed; but assuredly not from any want of zeal or diligence on the part of the noble biographer. Even at Hampden there are, it seems, no important papers relating to the most illustrious proprietor of that ancient domain. The most valuable memorials of him, which still exist, belong to the family of his friend, Sir John Eliot. Lord Eliot has furnished the portrait which is engraved for this work, together with some very interesting letters. The portrait is undoubtedly an original, and probably the only original now in existence. The

intellectual forehead, the mild penetration of the eye, and the inflexible resolution expressed by the lines of the mouth, sufficiently guarantee the likeness. We shall probably make some extracts from the letters. They contain almost all the new information that Lord Nugent has been able to procure respecting the private pursuits of the great man, whose memory he worships with an enthusiastic, but not extravagant, veneration.

The public life of Hampden is surrounded by no obscurity. His history, more particularly from the year 1640 to his death, is the history of England. These Memoirs must be considered as Memoirs of the history of England; and, as such, they well deserve to be attentively perused. They contain some curious facts which, to us at least, are new, much spirited narrative, many judicious remarks, and much eloquent declamation.

We are not sure that even the want of information respecting the private character of Hampden is not in itself a circumstance as strikingly characteristic as any which the most minute chronicler, O'Meara, Mrs. Thrale, or Boswell himself, ever recorded concerning their heroes. The celebrated Puritan leader is an almost solitary instance of a great man who neither sought nor shunned greatness, who found glory only because glory lay in the plain path of duty. During more than forty years he was known to his country neighbours as a gentleman of cultivated mind, of high principles, of polished address, happy in his family,

and active in the discharge of local duties; and to political men, as an honest, industrious, and sensible member of Parliament, not eager to display his talents, stanch to his party, and attentive to the interests of his constituents. A great and terrible crisis came. A direct attack was made by an arbitrary Government on a sacred right of Englishmen, on a right which was the chief security for all their other rights. The nation looked round for a defender. Calmly and unostentatiously the plain Buckinghamshire Esquire placed himself at the head of his countrymen, and right before the face and across the path of tyranny. The times grew darker and more troubled. Public service, perilous, arduous, delicate, was required; and to every service the intellect and the courage of this wonderful man were found fully equal. He became a debater of the first order, a most dexterous manager of the House of Commons, a negotiator, a soldier. He governed a fierce and turbulent assembly, abounding in able men, as easily as he had governed his family. He showed himself as competent to direct a campaign as to conduct the business of the petty sessions. We can scarcely express the admiration which we feel for a mind so great, and at the same time so healthful and so well proportioned, so willingly contracting itself to the humblest duties, so easily expanding itself to the highest, so contented in repose, so powerful in action. Almost every part of this virtuous and blameless life which is not hidden from us in modest privacy is a

precious and splendid portion of our national history. Had the private conduct of Hampden afforded the slightest pretence for censure, he would have been assailed by the same blind malevolence which, in defiance of the clearest proofs, still continues to call Sir John Eliot an assassin. Had there been even any weak part in the character of Hampden, had his manners been in any respect open to ridicule, we may be sure that no mercy would have been shown to him by the writers of Charles's faction. Those writers have carefully preserved every little circumstance which could tend to make their opponents odious or contemptible. They have made themselves merry with the cant of injudicious zealots. They have told us that Pym broke down in a speech, that Ireton had his nose pulled by Hollis, that the Earl of Northumberland cudgelled Henry Marten, that St. John's manners were sullen, that Vane had an ugly face, that Cromwell had a red nose. But neither the artful Clarendon nor the scurrilous Denham could venture to throw the slightest imputation on the morals or the manners of Hampden. What was the opinion entertained respecting him by the best men of his time, we learn from Baxter. That eminent person, eminent not only for his piety and his fervid devotional eloquence, but for his moderation, his knowledge of political affairs, and his skill in judging of characters, declared in the "Saints' Rest" that one of the pleasures which he hoped to enjoy in heaven was the society of Hampden. In the editions printed after

the Restoration the name of Hampden was omitted. "But I must tell the reader," says Baxter, "that I did blot it out, not as changing my opinion of the person. . . . Mr. John Hampden was one that friends and enemies acknowledged to be most eminent for prudence, piety, and peaceable counsels, having the most universal praise of any gentleman that I remember of that age. I remember a moderate, prudent, aged gentleman, far from him, but acquainted with him, whom I have heard saying that if he might choose what person he would be then in the world, he would be John Hampden." We cannot but regret that we have not fuller memorials of a man who, after passing through the most severe temptations by which human virtue can be tried, after acting a most conspicuous part in a revolution and a civil war, could yet deserve such praise as this from such authority. Yet the want of memorials is surely the best proof that hatred itself could find no blemish on his memory.

The story of his early life is soon told. He was the head of a family which had been settled in Buckinghamshire before the Conquest. Part of the estate which he inherited had been bestowed by Edward the Confessor on Baldwyn de Hampden, whose name seems to indicate that he was one of the Norman favourites of the last Saxon king. During the contest between the houses of York and Lancaster, the Hampdens adhered to the party of the Red Rose, and were, consequently, persecuted by Edward IV., and favoured by Henry VII.

Under the Tudors the family was great and flourishing. Griffith Hampden, high sheriff of Buckinghamshire, entertained Elizabeth with great magnificence at his seat. His son, William Hampden, sat in the Parliament which that Queen summoned in the year 1593. William married Elizabeth Cromwell, aunt of the celebrated man who afterwards governed the British Islands with more than regal power; and from this marriage sprang John Hampden.

He was born in 1594. In 1597 his father died, and left him heir to a very large estate. After passing some years at the grammar-school of Thame, young Hampden was sent at fifteen to Magdalen College, in the University of Oxford. At nineteen he was admitted a student of the Inner Temple, where he made himself master of the principles of the English law. In 1619 he married Elizabeth Symeon, a lady to whom he appears to have been fondly attached. In the following year he was returned to Parliament by a borough which has in our time obtained a miserable celebrity, the borough of Grampound.

Of his private life during his early years little is known beyond what Clarendon has told us. "In his entrance into the world," says that great historian, "he indulged himself in all the licence in sports, and exercises, and company, which were used by men of the most jolly conversation." A remarkable change, however, passed on his character. "On a sudden," says Clarendon, "from a life of great pleasure and

licence he retired to extraordinary sobriety and strictness, to a more reserved and melancholy society." It is probable that this change took place when Hampden was about twenty-five years old. At that age he was united to a woman whom he loved and esteemed. At that age he entered into political life. A mind so happily constituted as his would naturally, under such circumstances, relinquish the pleasures of dissipation for domestic enjoyments and public duties.

His enemies have allowed that he was a man in whom virtue showed itself in its mildest and least austere form. With the morals of a Puritan he had the manners of an accomplished courtier. Even after the change in his habits, "he preserved," says Clarendon, "his own natural cheerfulness and vivacity, and, above all, a flowing courtesy to all men." These qualities distinguished him from most of the members of his sect and his party, and in the great crisis in which he afterwards took a principal part were of scarcely less service to the country than his keen sagacity and his dauntless courage.

In January, 1621, Hampden took his seat in the House of Commons. His mother was exceedingly desirous that her son should obtain a peerage. His family, his possessions, and his personal accomplishments were such as would, in any age, have justified him in pretending to that honour. But in the reign of James I. there was one short cut to the House of Lords. It was but to ask, to pay, and to have. The sale of

titles was carried on as openly as the sale of boroughs in our times. Hampden turned away with contempt from the degrading honours with which his family desired to see him invested, and attached himself to the party which was in opposition to the Court.

It was about this time, as Lord Nugent has justly remarked, that Parliamentary opposition began to take a regular form. From a very early age the English had enjoyed a far larger share of liberty than had fallen to the lot of any neighbouring people. How it chanced that a country conquered and enslaved by invaders, a country of which the soil had been portioned out among foreign adventurers, and of which the laws were written in a foreign tongue, a country given over to that worst tyranny, the tyranny of caste over caste, should have become the seat of civil liberty, the object of the admiration and envy of surrounding states, is one of the most obscure problems in the philosophy of history. But the fact is certain. Within a century and a half after the Norman Conquest, the Great Charter was conceded. Within two centuries after the Conquest, the first House of Commons met. Froissart tells us, what indeed his whole narrative sufficiently proves, that, of all the nations of the fourteenth century, the English were the least disposed to endure oppression. "C'est le plus périlleux peuple qui soit au monde, et plus outrageux et orgueilleux." The good canon probably did not perceive that all the prosperity and internal peace which this dangerous people



enjoyed were the fruits of the spirit which he designates as proud and outrageous. He has, however, borne ample testimony to the effect, though he was not sagacious enough to trace it to its cause. "En le royaume d'Angleterre," says he, "toutes gens, labour-eurs et marchands, ont appris de vivre en paix, et à mener leurs marchandises paisiblement, et les labour-eurs labourer." In the fifteenth century, though England was convulsed by the struggle between the two branches of the royal family, the physical and moral condition of the people continued to improve. Villenage almost wholly disappeared. The calamities of war were little felt, except by those who bore arms. The oppressions of the Government were little felt, except by the aristocracy. The institutions of the country, when compared with the institutions of the neighbouring kingdoms, seem to have been not undeserving of the praises of Fortescue. The Government of Edward IV., though we call it cruel and arbitrary, was humane and liberal when compared with that of Louis XI. or that of Charles the Bold. Comines, who had lived amidst the wealthy cities of Flanders, and who had visited Florence and Venice, had never seen a people so well governed as the English. "Or selon mon advis," says he, "entre toutes les seigneuries du monde, dont j'ay connoissance, ou la chose publique est mieulx traitée, et ou regne moins de violence sur le peuple, et ou il n'y a nuls édifices abbatus ny demolis

*pour guerre, c'est Angleterre ; et tombe le sort et le malheur sur ceulx qui font la guerre."*

About the close of the fifteenth and the commencement of the sixteenth century, a great portion of the influence which the aristocracy had possessed passed to the Crown. No English king has ever enjoyed such absolute power as Henry VIII. But while the royal prerogatives were acquiring strength at the expense of the nobility, two great revolutions took place, destined to be the parents of many revolutions, the invention of printing and the Reformation of the Church.

The immediate effect of the Reformation in England was by no means favourable to political liberty. The authority which had been exercised by the Popes was transferred almost entire to the King. Two formidable powers which had often served to check each other were united in a single despot. If the system on which the founders of the Church of England acted could have been permanent, the Reformation would have been, in a political sense, the greatest curse that ever fell on our country. But that system carried within it the seeds of its own death. It was possible to transfer the name of Head of the Church from Clement to Henry ; but it was impossible to transfer to the new Establishment the veneration which the old Establishment had inspired. Mankind had not broken one yoke in pieces only in order to put on another. The supremacy of the Bishop of Rome had been for ages considered as a fundamental principle of

Christianity. It had for it everything that could make a prejudice deep and strong, venerable antiquity, high authority, general consent. It had been taught in the first lessons of the nurse. It was taken for granted in all the exhortations of the priest. To remove it was to break innumerable associations, and to give a great and perilous shock to the principles. Yet this prejudice, strong as it was, could not stand in the great day of the deliverance of the human reason. And it was not to be expected that the public mind, just after freeing itself by an unexampled effort from a bondage which it had endured for ages, would patiently submit to a tyranny which could plead no ancient title. Rome had at least prescription on its side. But Protestant intolerance, despotism in an upstart sect, infallibility claimed by guides who acknowledged that they had passed the greater part of their lives in error, restraints imposed on the liberty of private judgment at the pleasure of rulers who could vindicate their own proceedings only by asserting the liberty of private judgment, these things could not long be borne. Those who had pulled down the crucifix could not long continue to persecute for the surplice. It required no great sagacity to perceive the inconsistency and dishonesty of men who, dissenting from almost all Christendom, would suffer none to dissent from themselves; who demanded freedom of conscience, yet refused to grant it; who execrated persecution, yet persecuted; who urged reason against the authority of one

opponent, and authority against the reasons of another. Bonner acted at least in accordance with his own principles. Cranmer could vindicate himself from the charge of being a heretic only by arguments which made him out to be a murderer.

Thus the system on which the English princes acted with respect to ecclesiastical affairs for some time after the Reformation was a system too obviously unreasonable to be lasting. The public mind moved while the Government moved, but would not stop where the Government stopped. The same impulse which had carried millions away from the Church of Rome, continued to carry them forward in the same direction. As Catholics had become Protestants, Protestants became Puritans; and the Tudors and Stuarts were as unable to avert the latter change as the Popes had been to avert the former. The Dissenting party increased and became strong under every kind of discouragement and oppression. They were a sect. The Government persecuted them; and they became an opposition. The old Constitution of England furnished to them the means of resisting the sovereign without breaking the law. They were the majority of the House of Commons. They had the power of giving or withholding supplies; and, by a judicious exercise of this power, they might hope to take from the Church its usurped authority over the consciences of men, and from the Crown some part of the vast prerogative which it had

recently acquired at the expense of the nobles and of the Pope.

The faint beginnings of this memorable contest may be discerned early in the reign of Elizabeth. The conduct of her last Parliament made it clear that one of those great revolutions which policy may guide but cannot stop was in progress. It was on the question of monopolies that the House of Commons gained its first great victory over the Throne. The conduct of the extraordinary woman who then governed England is an admirable study for politicians who live in unquiet times. It shows how thoroughly she understood the people whom she ruled, and the crisis in which she was called to act. What she held, she held firmly. What she gave, she gave graciously. She saw that it was necessary to make a concession to the nation; and she made it, not grudgingly, not tardily, not as a matter of bargain and sale, not, in a word, as Charles I. would have made it, but promptly and cordially. Before a Bill could be framed or an Address presented, she applied a remedy to the evil of which the nation complained. She expressed in the warmest terms her gratitude to her faithful Commons for detecting abuses which interested persons had concealed from her. If her successors had inherited her wisdom with her crown, Charles I. might have died of old age, and James II. would never have seen St. Germain's.

She died; and the kingdom passed to one who was, in his own opinion, the greatest master of king-craft

that ever lived, but who was, in truth, one of those kings whom God seems to send for the express purpose of hastening revolutions. Of all the enemies of liberty whom Britain has produced, he was at once the most harmless and the most provoking. His office resembled that of the man who, in a Spanish bull-fight, goads the torpid savage to fury by shaking a red rag in the air, and by now and then throwing a dart, sharp enough to sting, but too small to injure. The policy of wise tyrants has always been to cover their violent acts with popular forms. James was always obtruding his despotic theories on his subjects without the slightest necessity. His foolish talk exasperated them infinitely more than forced loans or benevolences would have done. Yet, in practice, no king ever held his prerogatives less tenaciously. He neither gave way gracefully to the advancing spirit of liberty nor took vigorous measures to stop it, but retreated before it with ludicrous haste, blustering and insulting as he retreated. The English people had been governed during near a hundred and fifty years by princes who, whatever might be their frailties or their vices, had all possessed great force of character, and who, whether beloved or hated, had always been feared. Now, at length, for the first time since the day when the sceptre of Henry IV. dropped from the hand of his lethargic grandson, England had a king whom she despised.

The follies and vices of the man increased the contempt which was produced by the feeble policy of the

sovereign. The indecorous gallantries of the Court, the habits of gross intoxication, in which even the ladies indulged, were alone sufficient to disgust a people whose manners were beginning to be strongly tinged with austerity. But these were trifles. Crimes of the most frightful kind had been discovered ; others were suspected. The strange story of the Gowries was not forgotten. The ignominious fondness of the King for his minions, the perjuries, the sorceries, the poisonings, which his chief favourites had planned within the walls of his palace, the pardon which, in direct violation of his duty and of his word, he had granted to the mysterious threats of a murderer, made him an object of loathing to many of his subjects. What opinion grave and moral persons residing at a distance from the Court entertained respecting him, we learn from Mrs. Hutchinson's "Memoirs." England was no place, the seventeenth century no time, for Sporus and Locusta. This was not all. The most ridiculous weaknesses seemed to meet in the wretched Solomon of Whitehall, pedantry, buffoonery, garrulity, low curiosity, the most contemptible personal cowardice. Nature and education had done their best to produce a finished specimen of all that a King ought not to be. His awkward figure, his rolling eye, his rickety walk, his nervous tremblings, his slobbering mouth, his broad Scotch accent, were imperfections which might have been found in the best and greatest man. Their effect, however, was to make James and his office objects of

contempt, and to dissolve those associations which had been created by the noble bearing of preceding monarchs, and which were in themselves no inconsiderable fence to royalty.

The sovereign whom James most resembled was, we think, Claudius Cæsar. Both had the same feeble vacillating temper, the same childishness, the same coarseness, the same poltroonery. Both were men of learning; both wrote and spoke, not indeed well, but still in a manner in which it seems almost incredible that men so foolish should have written or spoken. The follies and indecencies of James are well described in the words which Suetonius uses respecting Claudius: “*Multa talia, etiam privatis deformia, nedum principi, neque infacundo, neque indocto, immo etiam pertinaciter liberalibus studiis dedito.*” The description given by Suetonius of the manner in which the Roman prince transacted business exactly suits the Briton:—“*In cognoscendo ac decernendo mira varietate animi fuit, modo circumspectus et sagax, modo inconsultus ac præceps, nonnunquam frivolus amentique similis.*” Claudius was ruled successively by two bad women, James successively by two bad men. Even the description of the person of Claudius, which we find in the ancient memoirs, might, in many points, serve for that of James:—“*Ceterum et ingredientem destituebant poplites minus firmi, et remisse quid vel serio agentem multa dehonestabant, risus indecens, ira turpior, spumante rictu, præterea linguæ titubantia.*”



The Parliament which James had called soon after his accession had been refractory. His second Parliament, called in the spring of 1614, had been more refractory still. It had been dissolved after a session of two months; and during six years the King had governed without having recourse to the Legislature. During those six years, melancholy and disgraceful events, at home and abroad, had followed one another in rapid succession; the divorce of Lady Essex, the murder of Overbury, the elevation of Villiers, the pardon of Somerset, the disgrace of Coke, the execution of Raleigh, the battle of Prague, the invasion of the Palatinate by Spinola, the ignominious flight of the son-in-law of the English King, the depression of the Protestant interest all over the Continent. All the extraordinary modes by which James could venture to raise money had been tried. His necessities were greater than ever, and he was compelled to summon the Parliament in which Hampden first appeared as a public man.

This Parliament lasted about twelve months. During that time it visited with deserved punishment several of those who, during the preceding six years, had enriched themselves by speculation and monopoly. Michell, one of the grasping patentees who had purchased of the favourite the power of robbing the nation, was fined and imprisoned for life. Mompesson, the original, it is said, of Massinger's Overreach, was outlawed and deprived of his ill-gotten wealth. Even Sir Edward

Villiers, the brother of Buckingham, found it convenient to leave England. A greater name is to be added to the ignominious list. By this Parliament was brought to justice that illustrious philosopher whose memory genius has half redeemed from the infamy due to servility, to ingratitude, and to corruption.

After redressing internal grievances, the Commons proceeded to take into consideration the state of Europe. The King flew into a rage with them for meddling with such matters, and, with characteristic judgment, drew them into a controversy about the origin of their House and of its privileges. When he found that he could not convince them, he dissolved them in a passion, and sent some of the leaders of the Opposition to ruminate on his logic in prison.

During the time which elapsed between this dissolution and the meeting of the next Parliament, took place the celebrated negotiation respecting the Infanta. The would-be despot was unmercifully brow-beaten; the would-be Solomon was ridiculously overreached. Steenie, in spite of the begging and sobbing of his dear dad and gossip, carried off baby Charles in triumph to Madrid. The sweet lads, as James called them, came back safe, but without their errand. The great master of king-craft, in looking for a Spanish match, had found a Spanish war. In February, 1624, a Parliament met, during the whole sitting of which James was a mere puppet in the hands of his baby, and of his poor slave and dog. The Commons were disposed to

support the King in the vigorous policy which his favourite urged him to adopt ; but they were not disposed to place any confidence in their feeble sovereign and his dissolute courtiers, or to relax in their efforts to remove public grievances. They, therefore, lodged the money which they voted for the war in the hands of Parliamentary Commissioners. They impeached the Treasurer, Lord Middlesex, for corruption, and they passed a Bill by which patents of monopoly were declared illegal.

Hampden did not, during the reign of James, take any prominent part in public affairs. It is certain, however, that he paid great attention to the details of Parliamentary business, and to the local interests of his own county. It was in a great measure owing to his exertions that Wendover, and some other boroughs on which the popular party could depend, recovered the elective franchise, in spite of the opposition of the Court.

The health of the King had for some time been declining. On the 27th of March, 1625, he expired. Under his weak rule the spirit of liberty had grown strong, and had become equal to a great contest. The contest was brought on by the policy of his successor. Charles bore no resemblance to his father. He was not a driveller, or a pedant, or a buffoon, or a coward. It would be absurd to deny that he was a scholar and a gentleman, a man of exquisite taste in the fine arts, a man of strict morals in private life.

His talents for business were respectable; his demeanour was kingly. But he was false, imperious, obstinate, narrow-minded, ignorant of the temper of his people, unobservant of the signs of his times. The whole principle of his government was resistance to public opinion; nor did he make any real concession to that opinion till it mattered not whether he resisted or conceded, till the nation, which had long ceased to love him or to trust him, had at last ceased to fear him.

His first Parliament met in June, 1625. Hampden sat in it as burgess for Wendover. The King wished for money; the Commons wished for the redress of grievances. The war, however, could not be carried on without funds. The plan of the Opposition was, it should seem, to dole out supplies by small sums, in order to prevent a speedy dissolution. They gave the King two subsidies only, and proceeded to complain that his ships had been employed against the Huguenots in France, and to petition in behalf of the Puritans who were persecuted in England. The King dissolved them, and raised money by Letters under his Privy Seal. The supply fell far short of what he needed, and in the spring of 1626 he called together another Parliament. In this Parliament Hampden again sat for Wendover.

The Commons resolved to grant a very liberal supply, but to defer the final passing of the Act for that purpose till the grievances of the nation should be redressed. The struggle which followed far exceeded in violence

any that had yet taken place. The Commons impeached Buckingham. The King threw the managers of the impeachment into prison. The Commons denied the right of the King to levy tonnage and poundage without their consent. The King dissolved them. They put forth a remonstrance. The King circulated a declaration vindicating his measures, and committed some of the most distinguished members of the Opposition to close custody. Money was raised by a forced loan, which was apportioned among the people according to the rate at which they had been respectively assessed to the last subsidy. On this occasion it was that Hampden made his first stand for the fundamental principle of the English Constitution. He positively refused to lend a farthing; he was required to give his reasons; he answered, "That he could be content to lend as well as others, but feared to draw upon himself that curse in Magna Charta which should be read twice a year against those who infringe it." For this spirited answer the Privy Council committed him close prisoner to the Gate House. After some time he was again brought up; but he persisted in his refusal, and was sent to a place of confinement in Hampshire.

The Government went on, oppressing at home, and blundering in all its measures abroad. A war was foolishly undertaken against France, and more foolishly conducted. Buckingham led an expedition against Rhé, and failed ignominiously. In the meantime soldiers were billeted on the people. Crimes of which

ordinary justice should have taken cognisance were punished by martial law. Near eighty gentlemen were imprisoned for refusing to contribute to the forced loan. The lower people who showed any signs of insubordination were pressed into the fleet, or compelled to serve in the army. Money, however, came in slowly, and the King was compelled to summon another Parliament. In the hope of conciliating his subjects, he set at liberty the persons who had been imprisoned for refusing to comply with his unlawful demands. Hampden regained his freedom, and was immediately re-elected burgess for Wendover.

Early in 1628 the Parliament met. During its first session, the Commons prevailed on the King, after many delays and much equivocation, to give, in return for five subsidies, his full and solemn assent to that celebrated instrument, the second great charter of the liberties of England, known by the name of the Petition of Right. By agreeing to this Act, the King bound himself to raise no taxes without the consent of Parliament, to imprison no man except by legal process, to billet no more soldiers on the people, and to leave the cognisance of offences to the ordinary tribunals.

In the summer, this memorable Parliament was prorogued. It met again in January, 1629. Buckingham was no more. That weak, violent, and dissolute adventurer, who, with no talents or acquirements but those of a mere courtier, had, in a great crisis of foreign and domestic politics, ventured on the part of Prime

Minister, had fallen, during the recess of Parliament, by the hand of an assassin. Both before and after his death the war had been feebly and unsuccessfully conducted. The King had continued, in direct violation of the Petition of Right, to raise tonnage and poundage without the consent of Parliament. The troops had again been billeted on the people; and it was clear to the Commons that the five subsidies which they had given as the price of the national liberties had been given in vain.

They met accordingly in no complying humour. They took into their most serious consideration the measures of the Government concerning tonnage and poundage. They summoned the officers of the Custom-house to their bar. They interrogated the Barons of the Exchequer. They committed one of the Sheriffs of London. Sir John Eliot, a distinguished member of the Opposition, and an intimate friend of Hampden, proposed a resolution condemning the unconstitutional imposition. The Speaker said that the King had commanded him to put no such question to the vote. This decision produced the most violent burst of feeling ever seen within the walls of Parliament. Hayman remonstrated vehemently against the disgraceful language which had been heard from the Chair. Eliot dashed the paper which contained his resolution on the floor of the House. Valentine and Hollis held the Speaker down in his seat by main force, and read the motion amidst the loudest shouts. The door was

locked. The key was laid on the table. Black Rod knocked for admittance in vain. After passing several strong resolutions, the House adjourned. On the day appointed for its meeting it was dissolved by the King, and several of its most eminent members, among whom were Hollis and Sir John Eliot, were committed to prison.

Though Hampden had as yet taken little part in the debates of the House, he had been a member of many very important committees, and had read and written much concerning the law of Parliament. A manuscript volume of Parliamentary cases, which is still in existence, contains many extracts from his notes.

He now retired to the duties and pleasures of a rural life. During the eleven years which followed the dissolution of the Parliament of 1628, he resided at his seat in one of the most beautiful parts of the county of Buckingham. The house, which has since his time been greatly altered, and which is now, we believe, almost entirely neglected, was an old English mansion built in the days of the Plantagenets and the Tudors. It stood on the brow of a hill which overlooks a narrow valley. The extensive woods which surround it were pierced by long avenues. One of those avenues the grandfather of the great statesman had cut for the approach of Elizabeth; and the opening, which is still visible for many miles, retains the name of the Queen's Gap. In this delightful retreat Hampden passed several years, performing with great activity all the duties of



a landed gentleman and a magistrate, and amusing himself with books and with field sports.

He was not in his retirement unmindful of his persecuted friends. In particular, he kept up a close correspondence with Sir John Eliot, who was confined in the Tower. Lord Nugent has published several of the letters. We may perhaps be fanciful; but it seems to us that every one of them is an admirable illustration of some part of the character of Hampden which Clarendon has drawn.

Part of the correspondence relates to the two sons of Sir John Eliot. These young men were wild and unsteady; and their father, who was now separated from them, was naturally anxious about their conduct. He at length resolved to send one of them to France, and the other to serve a campaign in the Low Countries. The letter which we subjoin shows that Hampden, though rigorous towards himself, was not uncharitable towards others, and that his puritanism was perfectly compatible with the sentiments and the tastes of an accomplished gentleman. It also illustrates admirably what has been said of him by Clarendon: "He was of that rare affability and temper in debate, and of that seeming humility and submission of judgment, as if he brought no opinion of his own with him, but a desire of information and instruction. Yet he had so subtle a way of interrogating, and, under cover of doubts, insinuating his objections, that he infused his own

opinions into those from whom he pretended to learn and receive them."

The letter runs thus: "I am so perfectly acquainted with your clear insight into the dispositions of men, and ability to fit them with courses suitable, that, had you bestowed sons of mine as you have done your own, my judgment durst hardly have called it into question, especially when, in laying the design, you have prevented the objections to be made against it. For if Mr. Richard Eliot will, in the intermissions of action, add study to practice, and adorn that lively spirit with flowers of contemplation, he will raise our expectations of another Sir Edward Vere, that had this character—all summer in the field, all winter in his study—in whose fall fame makes this kingdom a great loser; and, having taken this resolution from counsel with the highest wisdom, as I doubt not you have, I hope and pray that the same power will crown it with a blessing answerable to our wish. The way you take with my other friend shows you to be none of the Bishop of Exeter's converts, of whose mind neither am I superstitiously. But had my opinion been asked, I should, as vulgar conceits use me to do, have showed my power rather to raise objections than to answer them. A temper between France and Oxford might have taken away his scruples, with more advantage to his years. . . . For although he be one of those that, if his age were looked for in no other book but that of the mind, would be found no ward if you should die

to-morrow, yet it is a great hazard, methinks, to see so sweet a disposition guarded with no more, amongst a people whereof many make it their religion to be superstitious in impiety and their behaviour to be affected in ill manners. But God, who only knoweth the periods of life and opportunities to come, hath designed him, I hope, for his own service betime, and stirred up your providence to husband him so early for great affairs. Then shall he be sure to find Him in France that Abraham did in Shechem and Joseph in Egypt, under whose wing alone is perfect safety.”

Sir John Eliot employed himself, during his imprisonment, in writing a treatise on government, which he transmitted to his friend. Hampden's criticisms are strikingly characteristic. They are written with all that “flowing courtesy” which is ascribed to him by Clarendon. The objections are insinuated with so much delicacy that they could scarcely gall the most irritable author. We see, too, how highly Hampden valued in the writings of others that conciseness which was one of the most striking peculiarities of his own eloquence. Sir John Eliot's style was, it seems, too diffuse, and it is impossible not to admire the skill with which this is suggested. “The piece,” says Hampden, “is as complete an image of the pattern as can be drawn by lines, a lively character of a large mind, the subject, method, and expression, excellent and homogeneal, and, to say truth, sweetheart, somewhat exceeding my commendations. My words cannot

render them to the life. Yet, to show my ingenuity rather than wit, would not a less model have given a full representation of that subject, not by diminution but by contraction of parts? I desire to learn. I dare not say. The variations upon each particular seem many; all, I confess, excellent. The fountain was full, the channel narrow; that may be the cause; or that the author resembled Virgil, who made more verses by many than he intended to write. To extract a just number, had I seen all this, I could easily have bid him make fewer; but if he had bade me tell him which he should have spared, I had been posed."

This is evidently the writing not only of a man of good sense and natural good taste, but of a man of literary habits. Of the studies of Hampden little is known. But, as it was at one time in contemplation to give him the charge of the education of the Prince of Wales, it cannot be doubted that his acquirements were considerable. Davila, it is said, was one of his favourite writers. The moderation of Davila's opinions and the perspicuity and manliness of his style could not but recommend him to so judicious a reader. It is not improbable that the parallel between France and England, the Huguenots and the Puritans, had struck the mind of Hampden, and that he already found within himself powers not unequal to the lofty part of Coligni.

While he was engaged in these pursuits, a heavy domestic calamity fell on him. His wife, who had

borne him nine children, died in the summer of 1634. She lies in the parish church of Hampden, close to the manor-house. The tender and energetic language of her epitaph still attests the bitterness of her husband's sorrow, and the consolation which he found in a hope full of immortality.

In the meantime the aspect of public affairs grew darker and darker. The health of Eliot had sunk under an unlawful imprisonment of several years. The brave sufferer refused to purchase liberty, though liberty would to him have been life, by recognising the authority which had confined him. In consequence of the representations of his physicians the severity of restraint was somewhat relaxed. But it was in vain. He languished and expired a martyr to that good cause for which his friend Hampden was destined to meet a more brilliant, but not a more honourable death.

All the promises of the King were violated without scruple or shame. The Petition of Right, to which he had, in consideration of moneys duly numbered, given a solemn assent, was set at nought. Taxes were raised by the royal authority. Patents of monopoly were granted. The old usages of feudal times were made pretexts for harassing the people with exactions unknown during many years. The Puritans were persecuted with cruelty worthy of the Holy Office. They were forced to fly from the country. They were imprisoned. They were whipped. Their ears were cut off. Their noses were slit. Their cheeks were branded

with red-hot iron. But the cruelty of the oppressor could not tire out the fortitude of the victims. The mutilated defenders of liberty again defied the vengeance of the Star Chamber, came back with undiminished resolution to the place of their glorious infamy, and manfully presented the stumps of their ears to be grubbed out by the hangman's knife. The hardy sect grew up and flourished in spite of everything that seemed likely to stunt it, struck its roots deep into a barren soil, and spread its branches wide to an inclement sky. The multitude thronged round Prynne in the pillory with more respect than they paid to Mainwaring in the pulpit, and treasured up the rags which the blood of Burton had soaked, with a veneration such as mitres and surplices had ceased to inspire.

For the misgovernment of this disastrous period Charles himself is principally responsible. After the death of Buckingham he seems to have been his own Prime Minister. He had, however, two counsellors who seconded him, or went beyond him, in intolerance and lawless violence; the one a superstitious driveller, as honest as a vile temper would suffer him to be, the other a man of great valour and capacity, but licentious, faithless, corrupt, and cruel.

Never were faces more strikingly characteristic of the individuals to whom they belonged than those of Laud and Strafford, as they still remain portrayed by the most skilful hand of that age. The mean forehead, the pinched features, the peering eyes of the prelate

suit admirably with his disposition. They mark him out as a lower kind of Saint Dominic, differing from the fierce and gloomy enthusiast who founded the Inquisition, as we might imagine the familiar imp of a spiteful witch to differ from an archangel of darkness. When we read his Grace's judgments, when we read the report which he drew up, setting forth that he had sent some Separatists to prison, and imploring the royal aid against others, we feel a movement of indignation. We turn to his Diary, and we are at once as cool as contempt can make us. There we learn how his picture fell down, and how fearful he was lest the fall should be an omen; how he dreamed that the Duke of Buckingham came to bed to him, that King James walked past him, that he saw Thomas Flaxney in green garments, and the Bishop of Worcester with his shoulders wrapped in linen. In the early part of 1627 the sleep of this great ornament of the Church seems to have been much disturbed. On the 5th of January he saw a merry old man with a wrinkled countenance, named Grove, lying on the ground. On the 14th of the same memorable month he saw the Bishop of Lincoln jump on a horse and ride away. A day or two after this he dreamed that he gave the King drink in a silver cup, and that the King refused it, and called for glass. Then he dreamed that he had turned Papist; of all his dreams the only one, we suspect, which came through the gate of horn. But of these visions our favourite is that which, as he has recorded, he enjoyed

on the night of Friday, the 9th of February, 1627. "I dreamed," says he, "that I had the scurvy; and that forthwith all my teeth became loose. There was one in especial in my lower jaw, which I could scarcely keep in with my finger till I had called for help." Here was a man to have the superintendence of the opinions of a great nation !

But Wentworth, who ever names him without thinking of those harsh dark features, ennobled by their expression into more than the majesty of an antique Jupiter; of that brow, that eye, that cheek, that lip, wherein, as in a chronicle, are written the events of many stormy and disastrous years, high enterprise accomplished, frightful dangers braved, power unsparingly exercised, suffering unshrinkingly borne; of that fixed look, so full of severity, of mournful anxiety, of deep thought, of dauntless resolution, which seems at once to forebode and to defy a terrible fate, as it lowers on us from the living canvas of Vandyke. Even at this day the haughty earl overawes posterity as he overawed his contemporaries, and excites the same interest when arraigned before the tribunal of history which he excited at the bar of the House of Lords. In spite of ourselves, we sometimes feel towards his memory a certain relenting similar to that relenting which his defence, as Sir John Denham tells us, produced in Westminster Hall.

This great, brave, bad man entered the House of Commons at the same time with Hampden, and took



the same side with Hampden. Both were among the richest and most powerful Commoners in the kingdom. Both were equally distinguished by force of character and by personal courage. Hampden had more judgment and sagacity than Wentworth. But no orator of that time equalled Wentworth in force and brilliancy of expression. In 1626 both these eminent men were committed to prison by the King: Wentworth, who was among the leaders of the Opposition, on account of his Parliamentary conduct; Hampden, who had not as yet taken a prominent part in debate, for refusing to pay taxes illegally imposed.

Here their path separated. After the death of Buckingham the King attempted to seduce some of the chiefs of the Opposition from their party; and Wentworth was among those who yielded to the seduction. He abandoned his associates, and hated them ever after with the deadly hatred of a renegade. High titles and great employments were heaped upon him. He became Earl of Strafford, Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, President of the Council of the North; and he employed all his power for the purpose of crushing those liberties of which he had been the most distinguished champion. His counsels respecting public affairs were fierce and arbitrary. His correspondence with Laud abundantly proves that government without Parliaments, government by the sword, was his favourite scheme. He was angry even that the course of justice between man and man should be unrestrained by the royal prerogative.

He grudged to the Courts of King's Bench and Common Pleas even that measure of liberty which the most absolute of the Bourbons allowed to the Parliaments of France. In Ireland, where he stood in the place of the King, his practice was in strict accordance with his theory. He set up the authority of the Executive Government over that of the courts of law. He permitted no person to leave the island without his licence. He established vast monopolies for his own private benefit. He imposed taxes arbitrarily. He levied them by military force. Some of his acts are described even by the partial Clarendon as powerful acts, acts which marked a nature excessively imperious, acts which caused dislike and terror in sober and dispassionate persons, high acts of oppression. Upon a most frivolous charge he obtained a capital sentence from a court-martial against a man of high rank who had given him offence. He debauched the daughter-in-law of the Lord Chancellor of Ireland, and then commanded that nobleman to settle his estate according to the wishes of the lady. The Chancellor refused. The Lord Lieutenant turned him out of office and threw him into prison. When the violent acts of the Long Parliament are blamed, let it not be forgotten from what a tyranny they rescued the nation.

Among the humbler tools of Charles were Chief-Justice Finch, and Noy the Attorney-General. Noy had, like Wentworth, supported the cause of liberty in Parliament, and had, like Wentworth, abandoned that

cause for the sake of office. He devised, in conjunction with Finch, a scheme of exaction which made the alienation of the people from the throne complete. A writ was issued by the King, commanding the City of London to equip and man ships of war for his service. Similar writs were sent to the towns along the coast. These measures, though they were direct violations of the Petition of Right, had at least some show of precedent in their favour. But, after a time, the Government took a step for which no precedent could be pleaded, and sent writs of ship-money to the inland counties. This was a stretch of power on which Elizabeth herself had not ventured, even at a time when all laws might with propriety have been made to bend to that highest law, the safety of the State. The inland counties had not been required to furnish ships, or money in the room of ships, even when the Armada was approaching our shores. It seemed intolerable that a prince who, by assenting to the Petition of Right, had relinquished the power of levying ship-money even in the out-ports, should be the first to levy it on parts of the kingdom where it had been unknown under the most absolute of his predecessors.

Clarendon distinctly admits that this tax was intended, not only for the support of the navy, but "for a spring and magazine that should have no bottom, and for an everlasting supply of all occasions." The nation well understood this; and from one end of England to the other the public mind was strongly excited.

Buckinghamshire was assessed at a ship of four hundred and fifty tons, or a sum of four thousand five hundred pounds. The share of the tax which fell to Hampden was very small; so small, indeed, that the sheriff was blamed for setting so wealthy a man at so low a rate. But, though the sum demanded was a trifle, the principle involved was fearfully important. Hampden, after consulting the most eminent constitutional lawyers of the time, refused to pay the few shillings at which he was assessed, and determined to incur all the certain expense, and the probable danger, of bringing to a solemn hearing this great controversy between the people and the Crown. "Till this time," says Clarendon, "he was rather of reputation in his own county than of public discourse or fame in the kingdom; but then he grew the argument of all tongues, every man inquiring who and what he was that durst, at his own charge, support the liberty and prosperity of the kingdom."

Towards the close of the year 1636, this great cause came on in the Exchequer Chamber before all the judges of England. The leading counsel against the writ was the celebrated Oliver St. John, a man whose temper was melancholy, whose manners were reserved, and who was as yet little known in Westminster Hall, but whose great talents had not escaped the penetrating eye of Hampden. The Attorney-General and Solicitor-General appeared for the Crown.

The arguments of the counsel occupied many days,

and the Exchequer Chamber took a considerable time for deliberation. The opinion of the bench was divided. So clearly was the law in favour of Hampden that, though the judges held their situations only during the royal pleasure, the majority against him was the least possible. Five of the twelve pronounced in his favour. The remaining seven gave their voices for the writ.

The only effect of this decision was to make the public indignation stronger and deeper. "The judgment," says Clarendon, "proved of more advantage and credit to the gentleman condemned than to the King's service." The courage which Hampden had shown on this occasion, as the same historian tells us, "raised his reputation to a great height generally throughout the kingdom." Even courtiers and Crown lawyers spoke respectfully of him. "His carriage," says Clarendon, "throughout that agitation was with that rare temper and modesty that they who watched him narrowly to find some advantage against his person, to make him less resolute in his cause, were compelled to give him a just testimony." But his demeanour, though it impressed Lord Falkland with the deepest respect, though it drew forth the praises of Solicitor-General Herbert, only kindled into a fiercer flame the ever-burning hatred of Strafford. That minister, in his letters to Laud, murmured against the lenity with which Hampden was treated. "In good faith," he wrote, "were such men rightly served, they should be whipped into their right wits." Again he

says, "I still wish Mr. Hampden, and others to his likeness, were well whipped into their right senses. And if the rod be so used that it smart not, I am the more sorry."

The person of Hampden was now scarcely safe. His prudence and moderation had hitherto disappointed those who would gladly have had a pretence for sending him to the prison of Eliot. But he knew that the eye of a tyrant was on him. In the year 1637 misgovernment had reached its height. Eight years had passed without a Parliament. The decision of the Exchequer Chamber had placed at the disposal of the Crown the whole property of the English people. About the time at which that decision was pronounced, Prynne, Bastwick, and Burton were mutilated by the sentence of the Star Chamber, and sent to rot in remote dungeons. The estate and the person of every man who had opposed the Court were at its mercy.

Hampden determined to leave England. Beyond the Atlantic Ocean a few of the persecuted Puritans had formed, in the wilderness of Connecticut, a settlement which has since become a prosperous Commonwealth, and which, in spite of the lapse of time and of the change of Government, still retains something of the character given to it by its first founders. Lord Saye and Lord Brooke were the original projectors of this scheme of emigration. Hampden had been early consulted respecting it. He was now, it appears, desirous to withdraw himself beyond the reach of

oppressors who, as he probably suspected, and as we know, were bent on punishing his manful resistance to their tyranny. He was accompanied by his kinsman, Oliver Cromwell, over whom he possessed great influence, and in whom he alone had discovered, under an exterior appearance of coarseness and extravagance, those great and commanding talents which were afterwards the admiration and the dread of Europe.

The cousins took their passage in a vessel which lay in the Thames, and which was bound for North America. They were actually on board when an Order of Council appeared, by which the ship was prohibited from sailing. Seven other ships, filled with emigrants, were stopped at the same time.

Hampden and Cromwell remained, and with them remained the Evil Genius of the House of Stuart. The tide of public affairs was even now on the turn. The King had resolved to change the ecclesiastical constitution of Scotland, and to introduce into the public worship of that kingdom ceremonies which the great body of the Scots regarded as Popish. This absurd attempt produced first discontents, then riots, and at length open rebellion. A provisional Government was established at Edinburgh, and its authority was obeyed throughout the kingdom. This Government raised an army, appointed a general, and summoned an Assembly of the Kirk. The famous instrument called the Covenant was put forth at this time, and was eagerly subscribed by the people.

The beginnings of this formidable insurrection were strangely neglected by the King and his advisers. But towards the close of the year 1638 the danger became pressing. An army was raised, and early in the following spring Charles marched northward at the head of a force sufficient, as it seemed, to reduce the Covenanters to submission.

But Charles acted at this conjuncture as he acted at every important conjuncture throughout his life. After oppressing, threatening, and blustering, he hesitated and failed. He was bold in the wrong place, and timid in the wrong place. He would have shown his wisdom by being afraid before the liturgy was read in St. Giles's Church. He put off his fear till he had reached the Scottish border with his troops. Then, after a feeble campaign, he concluded a treaty with the insurgents and withdrew his army. But the terms of the pacification were not observed. Each party charged the other with foul play. The Scots refused to disarm. The King found great difficulty in re-assembling his forces. His late expedition had drained his treasury. The revenues of the next year had been anticipated. At another time he might have attempted to make up the deficiency by illegal expedients, but such a course would clearly have been dangerous when part of the island was in rebellion. It was necessary to call a Parliament. After eleven years of suffering the voice of the nation was to be heard once more.

In April, 1640, the Parliament met, and the King



had another chance of conciliating his people. The new House of Commons was, beyond all comparison, the least refractory House of Commons that had been known for many years. Indeed, we have never been able to understand how, after so long a period of misgovernment, the representatives of the nation should have shown so moderate and so loyal a disposition. Clarendon speaks with admiration of their dutiful temper. "The House, generally," says he, "was exceedingly disposed to please the King, and to do him service." "It could never be hoped," he observes elsewhere, "that more sober or dispassionate men would ever meet together in that place, or fewer who brought ill purposes with them."

In this Parliament Hampden took his seat as member for Buckinghamshire, and thenceforward, till the day of his death, gave himself up, with scarcely any intermission, to public affairs. He took lodgings in Gray's Inn Lane, near the house occupied by Pym, with whom he lived in habits of the closest intimacy. He was now decidedly the most popular man in England. The Opposition looked to him as their leader, and the servants of the King treated him with marked respect.

Charles requested the Parliament to vote an immediate supply, and pledged his word that, if they would gratify him in this request, he would afterwards give them time to represent their grievances to him. The grievances under which the nation suffered were so

serious, and the royal word had been so shamefully violated, that the Commons could hardly be expected to comply with this request. During the first week of the Session the minutes of the proceedings against Hampden were laid on the table by Oliver St. John, and a committee reported that the case was matter of grievance. The King sent a message to the Commons, offering, if they would vote him twelve subsidies, to give up the prerogative of ship-money. Many years before he had received five subsidies in consideration of his assent to the Petition of Right. By assenting to that petition he had given up the right of levying ship-money, if he ever possessed it. How he had observed the promises made to his third Parliament, all England knew; and it was not strange that the Commons should be somewhat unwilling to buy from him, over and over again, their own ancient and undoubted inheritance.

His message, however, was not unfavourably received. The Commons were ready to give a large supply, but they were not disposed to give it in exchange for a prerogative of which they altogether denied the existence. If they acceded to the proposal of the King, they recognised the legality of the writs of ship-money.

Hampden, who was a greater master of Parliamentary tactics than any man of his time, saw that this was the prevailing feeling, and availed himself of it with great dexterity. He moved that the question should be put, "Whether the House would consent to

the proposition made by the King as contained in the message." Hyde interfered, and proposed that the question should be divided; that the sense of the House should be taken merely on the point whether there should be a supply or no supply; and that the manner and the amount should be left for subsequent consideration.

The majority of the House was for granting a supply, but against granting it in the manner proposed by the King. If the House had divided on Hampden's question, the Court would have sustained a defeat; if on Hyde's, the Court would have gained an apparent victory. Some members called for Hyde's motion, others for Hampden's. In the midst of the uproar the Secretary of State, Sir Harry Vane, rose and stated that the supply would not be accepted unless it were voted according to the tenor of the message. Vane was supported by Herbert, the Solicitor-General. Hyde's motion was, therefore, no further pressed, and the debate on the general question was adjourned till the next day.

On the next day the King came down to the House of Lords and dissolved the Parliament with an angry speech. His conduct on this occasion has never been defended by any of his apologists. Clarendon condemns it severely. "No man," says he, "could imagine what offence the Commons had given." The offence which they had given is plain. They had, indeed, behaved most temperately and most respectfully; but they had shown a disposition to redress wrongs and to vindicate

the laws, and this was enough to make them hateful to a King whom no law could bind, and whose whole government was one system of wrong.

The nation received the intelligence of the dissolution with sorrow and indignation. The only persons to whom this event gave pleasure were those few discerning men who thought that the maladies of the State were beyond the reach of gentle remedies. Oliver St. John's joy was too great for concealment; it lighted up his dark and melancholy features, and made him, for the first time, indiscreetly communicative. He told Hyde that things must be worse before they could be better, and that the dissolved Parliament would never have done all that was necessary. St. John, we think, was in the right. No good could then have been done by any Parliament which did not fully understand that no confidence could safely be placed in the King, and that while he enjoyed more than the shadow of power the nation would never enjoy more than the shadow of liberty.

As soon as Charles had dismissed the Parliament, he threw several members of the House of Commons into prison, ship-money was exacted more rigorously than ever, and the Mayor and Sheriffs of London were prosecuted before the Star Chamber for slackness in levying it. Wentworth, it is said, observed with characteristic insolence and cruelty, that things would never go right till the Aldermen were hanged. Large sums were raised by force on those counties in which

the troops were quartered. All the wretched shifts of a beggared Exchequer were tried; forced loans were raised; great quantities of goods were bought on long credit and sold for ready money. A scheme for debasing the currency was under consideration. At length, in August, the King again marched northward.

The Scots advanced into England to meet him. It is by no means improbable that this bold step was taken by the advice of Hampden, and of those with whom he acted; and this has been made matter of grave accusation against the English Opposition. It is said that to call in the aid of foreigners in a domestic quarrel is the worst of treasons, and that the Puritan leaders, by taking this course, showed that they were regardless of the honour and independence of the nation, and anxious only for the success of their own faction. We are utterly unable to see any distinction between the case of the Scotch invasion in 1640 and the case of the Dutch invasion in 1688; or rather, we see distinctions which are to the advantage of Hampden and his friends. We believe Charles to have been a worse and more dangerous King than his son. The Dutch were strangers to us, the Scots a kindred people, speaking the same language, subjects of the same prince, not aliens in the eye of the law. If, indeed, it had been possible that a Scotch army or a Dutch army could have enslaved England, those who persuaded Leslie to cross the Tweed, and those who signed the invitation to the Prince of Orange, would have been traitors to their

country ; but such a result was out of the question. All that either a Scotch or a Dutch invasion could do was to give the public feeling of England an opportunity to show itself. Both expeditions would have ended in complete and ludicrous discomfiture had Charles and James been supported by their soldiers and their people. In neither case, therefore, was the independence of England endangered ; in both cases, her liberties were preserved.

The second campaign of Charles against the Scots was short and ignominious. His soldiers, as soon as they saw the enemy, ran away as English soldiers have never run either before or since. It can scarcely be doubted that their flight was the effect, not of cowardice, but of disaffection. The four northern counties of England were occupied by the Scotch army, and the King retired to York.

The game of tyranny was now up. Charles had risked and lost his last stake. It is not easy to retrace the mortifications and humiliations which the tyrant now had to endure without a feeling of vindictive pleasure. His army was mutinous ; his Treasury was empty ; his people clamoured for a Parliament ; addresses and petitions against the Government were presented. Strafford was for shooting the petitioners by martial law, but the King could not trust the soldiers. A great council of Peers was called at York, but the King could not trust even the Peers. He struggled, evaded, hesitated, tried every shift, rather than again face the

representatives of his injured people. At length no shift was left. He made a truce with the Scots, and summoned a Parliament.

The leaders of the popular party had, after the late dissolution, remained in London for the purpose of organising a scheme of opposition to the Court. They now exerted themselves to the utmost. Hampden, in particular, rode from county to county, exhorting the electors to give their votes to men worthy of their confidence. The great majority of the returns was on the side of the Opposition. Hampden was himself chosen member both for Wendover and Buckinghamshire; he made his election to serve for the county.

On the 3rd of November, 1640, a day to be long remembered, met that great Parliament, destined to every extreme of fortune, to empire and to servitude, to glory and to contempt; at one time the sovereign of its sovereign, at another time the servant of its servants. From the first day of meeting the attendance was great, and the aspect of the members was that of men not disposed to do the work negligently. The dissolution of the late Parliament had convinced most of them that half measures would no longer suffice. Clarendon tells us that "the same men who, six months before, were observed to be of very moderate tempers, and to wish that gentle remedies might be applied, talked now in another dialect both of kings and persons, and said that they must now be of another temper than they were the last Parliament." The debt of vengeance was

swollen by all the usury which had been accumulating during many years, and payment was made to the full.

This memorable crisis called forth parliamentary abilities such as England had never before seen. Among the most distinguished members of the House of Commons were Falkland, Hyde, Digby, young Harry Vane, Oliver St. John, Denzil Hollis, Nathaniel Fiennes; but two men exercised a paramount influence over the legislature and the country, Pym and Hampden, and, by the universal consent of friends and enemies, the first place belonged to Hampden.

On occasions which required set speeches Pym generally took the lead. Hampden very seldom rose till late in a debate; his speaking was of that kind which has in every age been held in the highest estimation by English Parliaments—ready, weighty, perspicuous, condensed. His perception of the feelings of the House was exquisite, his temper unalterably placid, his manner eminently courteous and gentleman-like. “Even with those,” says Clarendon, “who were able to preserve themselves from his infusions, and who discerned those opinions to be fixed in him with which they could not comply, he always left the character of an ingenious and conscientious person.” His talents for business were as remarkable as his talents for debate. “He was,” says Clarendon, “of an industry and vigilance not to be tired out or wearied by the most laborious, and of parts not to be imposed upon by the most subtle and sharp.” Yet it was rather



to his moral than to his intellectual qualities that he was indebted for the vast influence which he possessed. "When this Parliament began"—we again quote Clarendon—"the eyes of all men were fixed upon him as their *patricæ pater*, and the pilot that must steer the vessel through the tempests and rocks which threatened it. And I am persuaded his power and interest at that time were greater to do good or hurt than any man's in the kingdom, or than any man of his rank hath had in any time; for his reputation of honesty was universal, and his affections seemed so publicly guided, that no corrupt or private ends could bias them. . . . He was, indeed, a very wise man and of great parts, and possessed with the most absolute spirit of popularity, and the most absolute faculties to govern the people, of any man I ever knew."

It is sufficient to recapitulate shortly the acts of the Long Parliament during its first session. Strafford and Laud were impeached and imprisoned. Strafford was afterwards attainted by Bill and executed. Lord Keeper Finch fled to Holland, Secretary Windebank to France. All those whom the King had during the last twelve years employed for the oppression of his people, from the servile judges who had pronounced in favour of the Crown against Hampden down to the sheriffs who had distrained for ship-money, and the Custom House officers who had levied tonnage and poundage, were summoned to answer for their conduct. The Star Chamber, the High Commission Court, the

Council of York, were abolished. Those unfortunate victims of Laud who, after undergoing ignominious exposure and cruel manglings, had been sent to languish in distant prisons, were set at liberty, and conducted through London in triumphant procession. The King was compelled to give the judges patents for life or during good behaviour. He was deprived of those oppressive powers which were the last relics of the old feudal tenures. The Forest Courts and the Stannary Courts were reformed. It was provided that the Parliament then sitting should not be prorogued or dissolved without its own consent, and that a Parliament should be held at least once every three years.

Many of these measures Lord Clarendon allows to have been most salutary, and few persons will in our times deny that in the laws passed during this session the good greatly preponderated over the evil. The abolition of those three hateful courts, the Northern Council, the Star Chamber, and the High Commission, would alone entitle the Long Parliament to the lasting gratitude of Englishmen

The proceeding against Strafford undoubtedly seems hard to people living in our days. It would probably have seemed merciful and moderate to people living in the sixteenth century. It is curious to compare the trial of Charles's minister with the trial, if it can be so called, of Lord Seymour of Sudeley, in the blessed reign of Edward the Sixth. None of the great reformers of our Church doubted the propriety of passing

an Act of Parliament for cutting off Lord Seymour's head without a legal conviction. The pious Cranmer voted for that Act; the pious Latimer preached for it; the pious Edward returned thanks for it; and all the pious Lords of the Council together exhorted their victim to what they were pleased facetiously to call "the quiet and patient suffering of justice."

But it is not necessary to defend the proceedings against Strafford by any such comparison. They are justified, in our opinion, by that which alone justifies capital punishment or any punishment, by that which alone justifies war—by the public danger. That there is a certain amount of public danger which will justify a legislature in sentencing a man to death by retrospective law, few people, we suppose, will deny. Few people, for example, will deny that the French Convention was perfectly justified in placing Robespierre, St. Just, and Couthon under the ban of the law, without a trial. This proceeding differed from the proceeding against Strafford only in being much more rapid and violent. Strafford was fully heard. Robespierre was not suffered to defend himself. Was there, then, in the case of Strafford, a danger sufficient to justify an act of attainder? We believe that there was. We believe that the contest in which the Parliament was engaged against the King was a contest for the security of our property, for the liberty of our persons, for everything which makes us to differ from the subjects of Don Miguel. We believe that the

cause of the Commons was such as justified them in resisting the King, in raising an army, in sending thousands of brave men to kill and to be killed. An act of attainder is surely not more a departure from the ordinary course of law than a civil war. An act of attainder produces much less suffering than a civil war. We are, therefore, unable to discover on what principle it can be maintained that a cause which justifies a civil war will not justify an act of attainder.

Many specious arguments have been urged against the retrospective law by which Strafford was condemned to death. But all these arguments proceed on the supposition that the crisis was an ordinary crisis. The attainder was, in truth, a revolutionary measure. It was part of a system of resistance which oppression had rendered necessary. It is as unjust to judge of the conduct pursued by the Long Parliament towards Strafford on ordinary principles as it would have been to indict Fairfax for murder because he cut down a cornet at Naseby. From the day on which the Houses met, there was a war waged by them against the King—a war for all that they held dear—a war carried on at first by means of parliamentary forms, at last by physical force; and, as in the second stage of that war, so in the first, they were entitled to do many things which in quiet times would have been culpable.

We must not omit to mention that those who were afterwards the most distinguished ornaments of the King's party supported the Bill of Attainder. It is

almost certain that Hyde voted for it. It is quite certain that Falkland both voted and spoke for it. The opinion of Hampden, as far as it can be collected from a very obscure note of one of his speeches, seems to have been that the proceeding by Bill was unnecessary, and that it would be a better course to obtain judgment on the impeachment.

During this year the Court opened a negotiation with the leaders of the Opposition. The Earl of Bedford was invited to form an administration on popular principles. St. John was made Solicitor-General. Hollis was to have been Secretary of State, and Pym Chancellor of the Exchequer. The post of tutor to the Prince of Wales was designed for Hampden. The death of the Earl of Bedford prevented this arrangement from being carried into effect; and it may be doubted whether, even if that nobleman's life had been prolonged, Charles would ever have consented to surround himself with counsellors whom he could not but hate and fear.

Lord Clarendon admits that the conduct of Hampden during this year was mild and temperate; that he seemed disposed rather to soothe than to excite the public mind; and that, when violent and unreasonable motions were made by his followers, he generally left the House before the division, lest he should seem to give countenance to their extravagance. His temper was moderate. He sincerely loved peace. He felt also great fear lest too precipitate a movement should

produce a reaction. The events which took place early in the next session clearly showed that this fear was not unfounded.

During the autumn the Parliament adjourned for a few weeks. Before the recess, Hampden was despatched to Scotland by the House of Commons, nominally as a commissioner, to obtain security for a debt which the Scots had contracted during the late invasion; but in truth that he might keep watch over the King, who had now repaired to Edinburgh, for the purpose of finally adjusting the points of difference which remained between him and his northern subjects. It was the business of Hampden to dissuade the Covenanters from making their peace with the Court at the expense of the popular party in England.

While the King was in Scotland, the Irish rebellion broke out. The suddenness and violence of this terrible explosion excited a strange suspicion in the public mind. The Queen was a professed Papist. The King and the Archbishop of Canterbury had not indeed been reconciled to the See of Rome; but they had, while acting towards the Puritan party with the utmost rigour, and speaking of that party with the utmost contempt, shown great tenderness and respect towards the Catholic religion and its professors. In spite of the wishes of successive Parliaments, the Protestant Separatists had been cruelly persecuted. And at the same time, in spite of the wishes of those very Parliaments, laws which were in force against the Papists,

and which, unjustifiable as they were, suited the temper of that age, had not been carried into execution. The Protestant Nonconformists had not yet learned toleration in the school of suffering. They reprobated the partial lenity which the Government showed towards idolaters, and, with some show of reason, ascribed to bad motives conduct which, in such a king as Charles, and such a prelate as Laud, could not possibly be ascribed to humanity or to liberality of sentiment. The violent Arminianism of the Archbishop, his childish attachment to ceremonies, his superstitious veneration for altars, vestments, and painted windows, his bigoted zeal for the constitution and the privileges of his order, his known opinions respecting the celibacy of the clergy, had excited great disgust throughout that large party which was every day becoming more and more hostile to Rome, and more and more inclined to the doctrines and the discipline of Geneva. It was believed by many that the Irish rebellion had been secretly encouraged by the Court; and, when the Parliament met again in November, after a short recess, the Puritans were more intractable than ever.

But that which Hampden had feared had come to pass. A reaction had taken place. A large body of moderate and well-meaning men, who had heartily concurred in the strong measures adopted before the recess, were inclined to pause. Their opinion was that, during many years, the country had been grievously

misgoverned, and that a great reform had been necessary; but that a great reform had been made, that the grievances of the nation had been fully redressed, that sufficient vengeance had been exacted for the past, that sufficient security had been provided for the future, and that it would, therefore, be both ungrateful and unwise to make any further attacks on the royal prerogative. In support of this opinion many plausible arguments have been used. But to all these arguments there is one short answer. The King could not be trusted.

At the head of those who may be called the Constitutional Royalists were Falkland, Hyde, and Culpeper. All these eminent men had, during the former year, been in very decided opposition to the Court. In some of those very proceedings with which their admirers reproach Hampden, they had taken a more decided part than Hampden. They had all been concerned in the impeachment of Strafford. They had all, there is reason to believe, voted for the Bill of Attainder. Certainly none of them voted against it. They had all agreed to the Act which made the consent of the Parliament necessary to a dissolution or prorogation. Hyde had been among the most active of those who attacked the Council of York. Falkland had voted for the exclusion of the bishops from the Upper House. They were now inclined to halt in the path of reform, perhaps to retrace a few of their steps.

A direct collision soon took place between the two parties into which the House of Commons, lately at



almost perfect unity with itself, was now divided. The opponents of the Government moved that celebrated address to the King which is known by the name of the Grand Remonstrance. In this address all the oppressive Acts of the preceding fifteen years were set forth with great energy of language; and, in conclusion, the King was entreated to employ no ministers in whom the Parliament could not confide.

The debate on the Remonstrance was long and stormy. It commenced at nine in the morning of the 21st of November, and lasted till after midnight. The division showed that a great change had taken place in the temper of the House. Though many members had retired from exhaustion, 300 voted; and the Remonstrance was carried by a majority of only nine. A violent debate followed, on the question whether the minority should be allowed to protest against this decision. The excitement was so great that several members were on the point of proceeding to personal violence. "We had sheathed our swords in each other's bowels," says an eye-witness, "had not the sagacity and great calmness of Mr. Hampden, by a short speech, prevented it." The House did not rise till two in the morning.

The situation of the Puritan leaders was now difficult and full of peril. The small majority which they still had might soon become a minority. Out of doors their supporters in the higher and middle classes were beginning to fall off. There was a growing opinion that the

King had been hardly used. The English are always inclined to side with a weak party which is in the wrong, rather than with a strong party which is in the right. This may be seen in all contests, from contests of boxers to contests of faction. Thus it was that a violent reaction took place in favour of Charles II. against the Whigs in 1681. Thus it was that an equally violent reaction took place in favour of George III. against the coalition in 1784. A similar reaction was beginning to take place during the second year of the Long Parliament. Some members of the Opposition "had resumed," says Clarendon, "their old resolution of leaving the kingdom." Oliver Cromwell openly declared that he and many others would have emigrated if they had been left in a minority on the question of the Remonstrance.

Charles had now a last chance of regaining the affection of his people. If he could have resolved to give his confidence to the leaders of the moderate party in the House of Commons, and to regulate his proceedings by their advice, he might have been, not, indeed, as he had been, a despot, but the powerful and respected king of a free people. The nation might have enjoyed liberty and repose under a Government with Falkland at its head, checked by a constitutional Opposition under the conduct of Hampden. It was not necessary that, in order to accomplish this happy end, the King should sacrifice any part of his lawful prerogative, or submit to any conditions inconsistent

with his dignity. It was necessary only that he should abstain from treachery, from violence, from gross breaches of the law. This was all that the nation was then disposed to require of him. And even this was too much.

For a short time he seemed inclined to take a wise and temperate course. He resolved to make Falkland Secretary of State and Culpeper Chancellor of the Exchequer. He declared his intention of conferring in a short time some important office on Hyde. He assured these three persons that he would do nothing relating to the House of Commons without their joint advice, and that he would communicate all his designs to them in the most unreserved manner. This resolution, had he adhered to it, would have averted many years of blood and mourning. But "in very few days," says Clarendon, "he did fatally swerve from it."

On the 3rd of January, 1642, without giving the slightest hint of his intention to those advisers whom he had solemnly promised to consult, he sent down the Attorney-General to impeach Lord Kimbolton, Hampden, Pym, Hollis, and two other members of the House of Commons, at the bar of the Lords, on a charge of high treason. It is difficult to find in the whole history of England such an instance of tyranny, perfidy, and folly. The most precious and ancient rights of the subject were violated by this act. The only way in which Hampden and Pym could legally

be tried for treason at the suit of the King was by a petty jury on a bill found by a grand jury. The Attorney-General had no right to impeach them. The House of Lords had no right to try them.

The Commons refused to surrender their members. The Peers showed no inclination to usurp the unconstitutional jurisdiction which the King attempted to force on them. A contest began, in which violence and weakness were on the one side, law and resolution on the other. Charles sent an officer to seal up the lodgings and trunks of the accused members. The Commons sent their sergeant to break the seals. The tyrant resolved to follow up one outrage by another. In making the charge he had struck at the institution of juries. In executing the arrest he struck at the privileges of Parliament. He resolved to go to the House in person with an armed force, and there to seize the leaders of the Opposition while engaged in the discharge of their parliamentary duties.

What was his purpose? Is it possible to believe that he had no definite purpose, that he took the most important step of his whole reign without having for one moment considered what might be its effects? Is it possible to believe that he went merely for the purpose of making himself a laughing-stock, that he intended, if he had found the accused members, and if they had refused, as it was their right and duty to refuse, the submission which he illegally demanded, to leave the House without bringing them away? If we

reject both these suppositions, we must believe, and we certainly do believe, that he went fully determined to carry his unlawful design into effect by violence; and, if necessary, to shed the blood of the chiefs of the Opposition on the very floor of the Parliament House.

Lady Carlisle conveyed intelligence of the design to Pym. The five members had time to withdraw before the arrival of Charles. They left the House as he was entering New Palace Yard. He was accompanied by about two hundred halberdiers of his guard, and by many gentlemen of the Court armed with swords. He walked up Westminster Hall. At the southern end of the hall his attendants divided to the right and left, and formed a lane to the door of the House of Commons. He knocked, entered, darted a look towards the place which Pym usually occupied, and, seeing it empty, walked up to the table. The Speaker fell on his knee. The members rose and uncovered their heads in profound silence, and the King took his seat in the Chair. He looked round the House. But the five members were nowhere to be seen. He interrogated the Speaker. The Speaker answered that he was merely the organ of the House, and had neither eyes to see nor tongue to speak, but according to their direction. The King muttered a few feeble sentences about his respect for the laws of the realm, and the privileges of Parliament, and retired. As he passed along the benches several resolute voices called out audibly, "Privilege!" He returned to Whitehall

with his company of bravoos, who, while he was in the House, had been impatiently waiting in the lobby for the word, cocking their pistols, and crying "Fall on." That night he put forth a proclamation directing that the ports should be stopped, and that no person should, at his peril, venture to harbour the accused members.

Hampden and his friends had taken refuge in Coleman Street. The City of London was indeed the fastness of public liberty, and was in those times a place of at least as much importance as Paris during the French Revolution. The City, properly so called, now consists in a great measure of immense warehouses and counting-houses, which are frequented by traders and their clerks during the day, and left in almost total solitude during the night. It was then closely inhabited by three hundred thousand persons, to whom it was not merely a place of business, but a place of constant residence. This great capital had as complete a civil and military organisation as if it had been an independent republic. Each citizen had his company; and the companies, which now seem to exist only for the sake of epicures and of antiquaries, were then formidable brotherhoods, the members of which were almost as closely bound together as the members of a Highland clan. How strong these artificial ties were the numerous and valuable legacies anciently bequeathed by citizens to their corporations abundantly prove. The municipal offices were filled by the most opulent and respectable merchants of the kingdom. The pomp of

the magistracy of the capital was inferior only to that which surrounded the person of the sovereign. The Londoners loved their City with that patriotic love which is found only in small communities like those of ancient Greece, or like those which arose in Italy during the Middle Ages. The numbers, the intelligence, the wealth of the citizens, the democratical form of their local government, and their vicinity to the Court and to the Parliament made them one of the most formidable bodies in the kingdom. Even as soldiers they were not to be despised. In an age in which war is a profession, there is something ludicrous in the idea of battalions composed of apprentices and shopkeepers, and officered by aldermen. But, in the early part of the seventeenth century there was no standing army in the island; and the militia of the metropolis was [not inferior in training to the militia of other places. A city which could furnish many thousands of armed men, abounding in natural courage, and not absolutely untaught with military discipline, was a formidable auxiliary in times of internal dissension. On several occasions during the civil war the trainbands of London distinguished themselves highly; and at the battle of Newbury, in particular, they repelled the fiery onset of Rupert and saved the army of the Parliament from destruction.

The people of this great city had long been thoroughly devoted to the national cause. Many of them had signed a protestation in which they declared their

resolution to defend the privileges of Parliament. Their enthusiasm had, indeed, of late begun to cool. But the impeachment of the five members, and the insult offered to the House of Commons, inflamed them to fury. Their houses, their purses, their pikes, were at the command of the representatives of the nation. London was in arms all night. The next day the shops were closed; the streets were filled with immense crowds; the multitude pressed round the King's coach and insulted him with opprobrious cries. The House of Commons, in the mean time, appointed a committee to sit in the City for the purpose of inquiring into the circumstances of the late outrage. The members of the committee were welcomed by a deputation of the Common Council. Merchant Tailors' Hall, Goldsmiths' Hall, and Grocers' Hall, were fitted up for their sittings. A guard of respectable citizens, duly relieved twice a day, was posted at their doors. The sheriffs were charged to watch over the safety of the accused members, and to escort them to and from the committee with every mark of honour.

A violent and sudden revulsion of feeling, both in the House and out of it, was the effect of the late proceedings of the King. The Opposition regained in a few hours all the ascendancy which it had lost. The constitutional royalists were filled with shame and sorrow. They saw that they had been cruelly deceived by Charles. They saw that they were unjustly, but not unreasonably, suspected by the nation. Clarendon



distinctly says that they perfectly detested the counsels by which the King had been guided, and were so much displeased and dejected at the unfair manner in which he had treated them, that they were inclined to retire from his service. During the debates on the breach of privilege they preserved a melancholy silence. To this day the advocates of Charles take care to say as little as they can about his visit to the House of Commons, and, when they cannot avoid mention of it, attribute to infatuation an act which, on any other supposition, they must admit to have been a frightful crime.

The Commons in a few days openly defied the King, and ordered the accused members to attend in their places at Westminster and to resume their parliamentary duties. The citizens resolved to bring back the champions of liberty in triumph before the windows of Whitehall. Vast preparations were made both by land and water for this great festival.

The King had remained in his palace humbled, dismayed, and bewildered, "feeling," says Clarendon, "the trouble and agony which usually attend generous and magnanimous minds upon their having committed errors;" feeling, we should say, the despicable repentance which attends the man who, having attempted to commit a crime, finds that he has only committed a folly. The populace hooted and shouted all day before the gates of the royal residence. The tyrant could not bear to see the triumph of those whom he had destined

to the gallows and the quartering-block. On the day preceding that which was fixed for their return he fled, with a few attendants, from that palace which he was never to see again till he was led through it to the scaffold.

On the 11th of January the Thames was covered with boats, and its shores with the gazing multitude. Armed vessels, decorated with streamers, were ranged in two lines from London Bridge to Westminster Hall. The members returned upon the river in a ship manned by sailors who had volunteered their services. The trainbands of the City, under the command of the sheriffs, marched along the Strand, attended by a vast crowd of spectators, to guard the avenues to the House of Commons; and thus, with shouts and loud discharges of ordnance, the accused patriots were brought back by the people whom they had served and for whom they had suffered. The restored members, as soon as they had entered the House, expressed, in the warmest terms, their gratitude to the citizens of London. The sheriffs were warmly thanked by the Speaker in the name of the Commons, and orders were given that a guard selected from the trainbands of the City should attend daily to watch over the safety of the Parliament.

The excitement had not been confined to London. When intelligence of the danger to which Hampden was exposed reached Buckinghamshire it excited the alarm and indignation of the people. Four thousand

freeholders of that county, each of them wearing in his hat a copy of the protestation in favour of the privileges of Parliament, rode up to London to defend the person of their beloved representative. They came in a body to assure Parliament of their full resolution to defend its privileges. Their petition was couched in the strongest terms. "In respect," said they, "of that latter attempt upon the honourable House of Commons, we are now come to offer our service to that end, and resolved, in their just defence, to live and die."

A great struggle was clearly at hand. Hampden had returned to Westminster much changed. His influence had hitherto been exerted rather to restrain than to animate the zeal of his party. But the treachery, the contempt of law, the thirst for blood, which the king had now shown, left no hope of a peaceable adjustment. It was clear that Charles must be either a puppet or a tyrant, that no obligation of law or of honour could bind him, and that the only way to make him harmless was to make him powerless.

The attack which the King had made on the five members was not merely irregular in manner. Even if the charges had been preferred legally, if the Grand Jury of Middlesex had found a true bill, if the accused persons had been arrested under a proper warrant and at a proper time and place, there would still have been in the proceeding enough of perfidy and injustice to vindicate the strongest measures which the Opposition

could take. To impeach Pym and Hampden was to impeach the House of Commons. It was notoriously on account of what they had done as members of that House that they were selected as objects of vengeance; and in what they had done as members of that House the majority had concurred. Most of the charges brought against them were common between them and the Parliament. They were accused, indeed, and it may be with reason, of encouraging the Scotch army to invade England. In doing this they had committed what was, in strictness of law, a high offence, the same offence which Devonshire and Shrewsbury committed in 1688. But the King had promised pardon and oblivion to those who had been the principals in the Scotch insurrection. Did it then consist with his honour to punish the accessaries? He had bestowed marks of his favour on the leading Covenanters. He had given the great seal of Scotland to one chief of the rebels, a marquissate to another, an earldom to Leslie, who had brought the Presbyterian army across the Tweed. On what principle was Hampden to be attainted for advising what Leslie was ennobled for doing? In a court of law, of course, no Englishman could plead an amnesty granted to the Scots. But, though not an illegal, it was surely an inconsistent and a most unkingly course, after pardoning and promoting the heads of the rebellion in one kingdom, to hang, draw, and quarter their accomplices in another.

The proceedings of the King against the five

members, or rather against that Parliament which had concurred in almost all the acts of the five members, was the cause of the civil war. It was plain that either Charles or the House of Commons must be stripped of all real power in the State. The best course which the Commons could have taken would perhaps have been to depose the King, as their ancestors had deposed Edward II. and Richard II. and as their children afterwards deposed James. Had they done this, had they placed on the throne a prince whose character and whose situation would have been a pledge for his good conduct, they might safely have left to that prince all the old constitutional prerogatives of the Crown, the command of the armies of the State, the power of making peers, the power of appointing ministers, a veto on bills passed by the two Houses. Such a prince, reigning by their choice, would have been under the necessity of acting in conformity with their wishes. But the public mind was not ripe for such a measure. There was no Duke of Lancaster, no Prince of Orange, no great and eminent person, near in blood to the throne, yet attached to the cause of the people. Charles was then to remain King, and it was therefore necessary that he should be King only in name. A William III., or a George I., whose title to the Crown was identical with the title of the people to their liberty, might safely be trusted with extensive powers. But new freedom could not exist in safety under the old tyrant. Since he was not to be deprived of the

name of King, the only course which was left was to make him a mere trustee, nominally seised of prerogatives of which others had the use, a Grand Lama, a *Roi Fainéant*, a phantom resembling those Dagoberts and Childeberts who wore the badges of royalty, while Ebroin and Charles Martel held the real sovereignty of the State.

The conditions which the Parliament propounded were hard, but we are sure not harder than those which even the Tories, in the Convention of 1689, would have imposed on James, if it had been resolved that James should continue to be king. The chief condition was that the command of the militia and the conduct of the war in Ireland should be left to the Parliament. On this point was that great issue joined, whereof the two parties put themselves on God and on the sword.

We think, not only that the Commons were justified in demanding for themselves the power to dispose of the military force, but that it would have been absolute insanity in them to leave that force at the disposal of the King. From the very beginning of his reign it had evidently been his object to govern by an army. His third Parliament had complained, in the Petition of Right, of his fondness for martial law, and of the vexatious manner in which he billeted his soldiers on the people. The wish nearest the heart of Strafford was, as his letters prove, that the revenue might be brought into such a state as would enable the King to keep a standing military establishment. In 1640

Charles had supported an army in the northern counties by lawless exactions. In 1641 he had engaged in an intrigue, the object of which was to bring that army to London for the purpose of overawing the Parliament. His late conduct had proved that, if he were suffered to retain even a small body-guard of his own creatures near his person, the Commons would be in danger of outrage, perhaps of massacre. The Houses were still deliberating under the protection of the militia of London. Could the command of the whole armed force of the realm have been, under these circumstances, safely confided to the King? Would it not have been frenzy in the Parliament to raise and pay an army of fifteen or twenty thousand men for the Irish war, and to give to Charles the absolute control of this army, and the power of selecting, promoting, and dismissing officers at his pleasure? Was it not probable that this army might become, what it is the nature of armies to become, what so many armies formed under much more favourable circumstances have become, what the army of the Roman Republic became, what the army of the French Republic became, an instrument of despotism? Was it not probable that the soldiers might forget that they were also citizens, and might be ready to serve their general against their country? Was it not certain that on the very first day on which Charles could venture to revoke his concessions, and to punish his opponents, he would establish an arbitrary government, and exact a bloody revenge?

Our own times furnish a parallel case. Suppose that a revolution should take place in Spain, that the Constitution of Cadiz should be re-established, that the Cortes should meet again, that the Spanish Prynnes and Burtons, who are now wandering in rags round Leicester Square, should be restored to their country, Ferdinand VII. would, in that case, of course repeat all the oaths and promises which he made in 1820, and broke in 1823. But would it not be madness in the Cortes, even if they were to leave him the name of King, to leave him more than the name? Would not all Europe scoff at them, if they were to permit him to assemble a large army for an expedition to America, to model that army at his pleasure, to put it under the command of officers chosen by himself? Should we not say that every member of the Constitutional party who might concur in such a measure would most richly deserve the fate which he would probably meet, the fate of Riego and of the Empecinado? We are not disposed to pay compliments to Ferdinand; nor do we conceive that we pay him any compliment, when we say that, of all sovereigns in history, he seems to us most to resemble in some very important points King Charles I. Like Charles, he is pious after a certain fashion; like Charles, he has made large concessions to his people after a certain fashion. It is well for him that he has had to deal with men who bore very little resemblance to the English Puritans.



The Commons would have the power of the sword ; the King would not part with it ; and nothing remained but to try the chances of war. Charles still had a strong party in the country. His august office, his dignified manners, his solemn protestations that he would for the time to come respect the liberties of his subjects, pity for fallen greatness, fear of violent innovation, secured to him many adherents. He had with him the Church, the Universities, a majority of the nobles and of the old landed gentry. The austerity of the Puritan manners drove most of the gay and dissolute youth of that age to the Royal Standard. Many good, brave, and moderate men, who disliked his former conduct, and who entertained doubts touching his present sincerity, espoused his cause unwillingly and with many painful misgivings, because, though they dreaded his tyranny much, they dreaded democratic violence more.

On the other side was the great body of the middle orders of England, the merchants, the shopkeepers, the yeomanry, headed by a very large and formidable minority of the peerage and of the landed gentry. The Earl of Essex, a man of respectable abilities and of some military experience, was appointed to the command of the Parliamentary army.

Hampden spared neither his fortune nor his person in the cause. He subscribed two thousand pounds to the public service. He took a colonel's commission in the army, and went into Buckinghamshire to raise a

regiment of infantry. His neighbours eagerly enlisted under his command. His men were known by their green uniform, and by their standard, which bore on one side the watchword of the Parliament, "God with us," and on the other the device of Hampden, "*Vestigia nulla retrorsum.*" This motto well described the line of conduct which he pursued. No member of his party had been so temperate, while there remained a hope that legal and peaceable measures might save the country. No member of his party showed so much energy and vigour when it became necessary to appeal to arms. He made himself thoroughly master of his military duty, and "performed it," to use the words of Clarendon, "upon all occasions most punctually." The regiment which he had raised and trained was considered as one of the best in the service of the Parliament. He exposed his person in every action, with an intrepidity which made him conspicuous even among thousands of brave men. "He was," says Clarendon, "of a personal courage equal to his best parts; so that he was an enemy not to be wished wherever he might have been made a friend, and as much to be apprehended where he was so, as any man could deserve to be." Though his military career was short, and his military situation subordinate, he fully proved that he possessed the talents of a great general, as well as those of a great statesman.

We shall not attempt to give a history of the war. Lord Nugent's account of the military operations is

very animated and striking. Our abstract would be dull, and probably unintelligible. There was, in fact, for some time no great and connected system of operations on either side. The war of the two parties was like the war of Arimanes and Oromasdes, neither of whom, according to the Eastern theologians, has any exclusive domain, who are equally omnipresent, who equally pervade all space, who carry on their eternal strife within every particle of matter. There was a petty war in almost every county. A town furnished troops to the Parliament, while the manor house of the neighbouring peer was garrisoned for the King. The combatants were rarely disposed to march far from their own homes. It was reserved for Fairfax and Cromwell to terminate this desultory warfare, by moving one overwhelming force successively against all the scattered fragments of the Royal party.

It is a remarkable circumstance that the officers who had studied tactics in what were considered as the best schools, under Vere in the Netherlands, and under Gustavus Adolphus in Germany, displayed far less skill than those commanders who had been bred to peaceful employments, and who never saw even a skirmish till the Civil War broke out. An unlearned person might hence be inclined to suspect that the military art is no very profound mystery, that its principles are the principles of plain good sense, and that a quick eye, a cool head, and a stout heart, will do more to make a general than all the diagrams of

Jomini. This, however, is certain, that Hampden showed himself a far better officer than Essex, and Cromwell than Leslie.

The military errors of Essex were probably in some degree produced by political timidity. He was honestly, but not warmly, attached to the cause of the Parliament; and next to a great defeat he dreaded a great victory. Hampden, on the other hand, was for vigorous and decisive measures. When he drew the sword, as Clarendon has well said, he threw away the scabbard. He had shown that he knew better than any public man of his time how to value and how to practise moderation. But he knew that the essence of war is violence, and that moderation in war is imbecility. On several occasions, particularly during the operations in the neighbourhood of Brentford, he remonstrated earnestly with Essex. Wherever he commanded separately, the boldness and rapidity of his movements presented a striking contrast to the sluggishness of his superior.

In the Parliament he possessed boundless influence. His employments towards the close of 1642 have been described by Denham in some lines which, though intended to be sarcastic, convey in truth the highest eulogy. Hampden is described in this satire as perpetually passing and repassing between the military station at Windsor and the House of Commons at Westminster, as overawing the general, and as giving law to that Parliament which knew no other law. It

was at this time that he organised that celebrated association of counties, to which his party was principally indebted for its victory over the the King.

In the early part of 1643, the shires lying in the neighbourhood of London, which were devoted to the cause of the Parliament, were incessantly annoyed by Rupert and his cavalry. Essex had extended his lines so far that almost every point was vulnerable. The young prince who, though not a great general, was an active and enterprising partisan, frequently surprised posts, burnt villages, swept away cattle, and was again at Oxford before a force sufficient to encounter him could be assembled.

The languid proceedings of Essex were loudly condemned by the troops. All the ardent and daring spirits in the Parliamentary party were eager to have Hampden at their head. Had his life been prolonged, there is every reason to believe that the supreme command would have been entrusted to him. But it was decreed that at this conjuncture England should lose the only man who united perfect disinterestedness to eminent talents, the only man who, being capable of gaining the victory for her, was incapable of abusing that victory when gained.

In the evening of the 17th of June, Rupert darted out of Oxford with his cavalry on a predatory expedition. At three in the morning of the following day, he attacked and dispersed a few Parliamentary soldiers who lay at Postcombe. He then flew to

Chinnor, burned the village, killed or took all the troops who were quartered there, and prepared to hurry back with his booty and his prisoners to Oxford.

Hampden had, on the preceding day, strongly represented to Essex the danger to which this part of the line was exposed. As soon as he received intelligence of Rupert's incursion, he sent off a horseman with a message to the General. The cavaliers, he said, could return only by Chiselhampton Bridge. A force ought to be instantly despatched in that direction for the purpose of intercepting them. In the meantime he resolved to set out with all the cavalry that he could muster, for the purpose of impeding the march of the enemy till Essex could take measures for cutting off their retreat. A considerable body of horse and dragoons volunteered to follow him. He was not their commander; he did not even belong to their branch of the service, but "he was," says Lord Clarendon, "second to none but the General himself in the observance and application of all men." On the field of Chalgrove he came up with Rupert. A fierce skirmish ensued. In the first charge Hampden was struck in the shoulder by two bullets, which broke the bone and lodged in his body. The troops of the Parliament lost heart and gave way. Rupert, after pursuing them for a short time, hastened to cross the bridge, and made his retreat unmolested to Oxford.

Hampden, with his head drooping, and his hands leaning on his horse's neck, moved feebly out of the

battle. The mansion which had been inhabited by his father-in-law, and from which in his youth he had carried home his bride Elizabeth, was in sight. There still remains an affecting tradition that he looked for a moment towards that beloved house, and made an effort to go thither to die. But the enemy lay in that direction. He turned his horse towards Thame, where he arrived almost fainting with agony. The surgeons dressed his wounds; but there was no hope. The pain which he suffered was most excruciating; but he endured it with admirable firmness and resignation. His first care was for his country. He wrote from his bed several letters to London concerning public affairs, and sent a last pressing message to the headquarters, recommending that the dispersed forces should be concentrated. When his public duties were performed, he calmly prepared himself to die. He was attended by a clergyman of the Church of England, with whom he had lived in habits of intimacy, and by the chaplain of the Buckinghamshire Green-coats, Dr. Spurton, whom Baxter describes as a famous and excellent divine.

A short time before Hampden's death the sacrament was administered to him. He declared that, though he disliked the government of the Church of England, he yet agreed with that Church as to all essential matters of doctrine. His intellect remained unclouded. When all was nearly over, he lay murmuring faint prayers for himself, and for the cause in which he died. "Lord

Jesus," he exclaimed in the moment of the last agony, "receive my soul. O Lord, save my country. O Lord, be merciful to——." In that broken ejaculation passed away his noble and fearless spirit.

He was buried in the parish church of Hampden. His soldiers, bareheaded, with reversed arms and muffled drums and colours, escorted his body to the grave, singing, as they marched, that lofty and melancholy psalm in which the frailty of human life is contrasted with the immutability of Him to whom a thousand years are as yesterday when it is passed, and as a watch in the night.

The news of Hampden's death produced as great a consternation in his party, according to Clarendon, as if their whole army had been cut off. The journals of the time amply prove that the Parliament and all its friends were filled with grief and dismay. Lord Nugent has quoted a remarkable passage from the next *Weekly Intelligencer* :—"The loss of Colonel Hampden goeth near the heart of every man that loves the good of his king and country, and makes some conceive little content to be at the army now that he is gone. The memory of this deceased colonel is such that in no age to come but it will more and more be had in honour and esteem; a man so religious, and of that prudence, judgment, temper, valour, and integrity, that he hath left few his like behind."

He had indeed left none his like behind him. There still remained, indeed, in his party many acute intellects,



many eloquent tongues, many brave and honest hearts. There still remained a rugged and clownish soldier, half fanatic, half buffoon, whose talents, discerned as yet only by one penetrating eye, were equal to all the highest duties of the soldier and the prince. But in Hampden, and in Hampden alone, were united all the qualities which, at such a crisis, were necessary to save the State, the valour and energy of Cromwell, the discernment and eloquence of Vane, the humanity and moderation of Manchester, the stern integrity of Hale, the ardent public spirit of Sydney. Others might possess the qualities which were necessary to save the popular party in the crisis of danger; he alone had both the power and the inclination to restrain its excesses in the hour of triumph. Others could conquer; he alone could reconcile. A heart as bold as his brought up the cuirassiers who turned the tide of battle on Marston Moor. As skilful an eye as his watched the Scotch army descending from the heights over Dunbar. But it was when to the sullen tyranny of Laud and Charles had succeeded the fierce conflict of sects and factions, ambitious of ascendancy and burning for revenge, it was when the vices and ignorance which the old tyranny had generated threatened the new freedom with destruction, that England missed the sobriety, the self-command, the perfect soundness of judgment, the perfect rectitude of intention, to which the history of revolutions furnishes no parallel, or furnishes a parallel in Washington alone.



# HORACE WALPOLE.

(OCTOBER, 1833.)

*Letters of Horace Walpole, Earl of Orford, to Sir Horace Mann, British Envoy at the Court of Tuscany.* Now first published from the Originals in the Possession of the Earl of WALDGRAVE. Edited by Lord DOVER. 2 vols. 8vo. London: 1833.

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WE cannot transcribe this title-page without strong feelings of regret. The editing of these volumes was the last of the useful and modest services rendered to literature by a nobleman of amiable manners, of untarnished public and private character, and of cultivated mind. On this, as on other occasions, Lord Dover performed his part diligently, judiciously, and without the slightest ostentation. He had two merits which are rarely found together in a commentator. He was content to be merely a commentator, to keep in the background, and to leave the foreground to the author whom he had undertaken to illustrate. Yet, though willing to be an attendant, he was by no means a slave; nor did he consider it as part of his duty to see no faults in the writer to whom he faithfully and assiduously rendered the humblest literary offices.

The faults of Horace Walpole's head and heart are indeed sufficiently glaring. His writings, it is true, rank as high among the delicacies of intellectual epicures as the Strasburg pies among the dishes described in the *Almanach des Gourmands*. But, as the *pâté-de-foie-gras* owes its excellence to the diseases of the wretched animal which furnishes it, and would be good for nothing if it were not made of livers preternaturally swollen, so none but an unhealthy and disorganised mind could have produced such literary luxuries as the works of Walpole.

He was, unless we have formed a very erroneous judgment of his character, the ~~most eccentric, the most artificial, the most fastidious, the most capricious of men.~~ His mind was a bundle of inconsistent whims and affectations. His features were covered by mask within mask. When the outer disguise of obvious affectation was removed, you were still as far as ever from seeing the real man. He played innumerable parts, and over-acted them all. When he talked misanthropy, he out-Timoned Timon. When he talked philanthropy, he left Howard at an immeasurable distance. He scoffed at courts, and kept a chronicle of their most trifling scandal; at society, and was blown about by its slightest veerings of opinion; at literary fame, and left fair copies of his private letters, with copious notes, to be published after his decease; at rank, and never for a moment forgot that he was an Honourable; at the practice of entail, and

tasked the ingenuity of conveyancers to tie up his villa in the strictest settlement.

The conformation of his mind was such that whatever was little seemed to him great, and whatever was great seemed to him little. Serious business was a trifle to him, and trifles were his serious business. To chat with blue stockings, to write little copies of complimentary verses on little occasions, to superintend a private press, to preserve from natural decay the perishable topics of Ranelagh and White's, to record divorces and bets, Miss Chudleigh's absurdities and George Selwyn's good sayings, to decorate a grotesque house with pie-crust battlements, to procure rare engravings and antique chimney-boards, to match odd gauntlets, to lay out a maze of walks within five acres of ground, these were the grave employments of his long life. From these he turned to politics as to an amusement. After the labours of the print-shop and the auction-room, he unbent his mind in the House of Commons. And, having indulged in the recreation of making laws, and voting millions, he returned to more important pursuits—to researches after Queen Mary's comb, Wolsey's red hat, the pipe which Van Tromp smoked during his last sea-fight, and the spur which King William struck into the flank of Sorrel.

In every thing in which Walpole busied himself, in the fine arts, in literature, in public affairs, he was drawn by some strange attraction from the great to the little, and from the useful to the odd. The

politics in which he took the keenest interests, were politics scarcely deserving of the name. The growlings of George II., the flirtations of Princess Emily with the Duke of Grafton, the amours of Prince Frederic and Lady Middlesex, the squabbles between Gold Stick and the Master of the Buckhounds, the disagreements between the tutors of Prince George—these matters engaged almost all the attention which Walpole could spare from matters more important still, from bidding for Zinckes and Petitots, from cheapening fragments of tapestry and handles of old lances, from joining bits of painted glass, and from setting up memorials of departed cats and dogs. While he was fetching and carrying the gossip of Kensington Palace and Carlton House, he fancied that he was engaged in politics, and when he recorded that gossip, he fancied that he was writing history.

He was, as he himself has told us, fond of faction as an amusement. He loved mischief, but he loved quiet: and he was constantly on the watch for opportunities of gratifying both his tastes at once. He sometimes contrived, without showing himself, to disturb the course of ministerial negotiations and to spread confusion through the political circles. He does not himself pretend that on these occasions he was actuated by public spirit; nor does he appear to have had any private advantage in view. He thought it a good practical joke to set public men together by the ears; and he enjoyed their perplexities,

their accusations, and their recriminations, as a malicious boy enjoys the embarrassment of a mis-directed traveller.

About politics, in the high sense of the word, he knew nothing, and cared nothing. He called himself a Whig—his father's son could scarcely assume any other name. It pleased him also to affect a foolish dislike of kings as kings, and a foolish love and admiration of rebels as rebels; and perhaps, while kings were not in danger, and while rebels were not in being, he really believed that he held the doctrines which he professed. To go no further than the letters now before us, he is perpetually boasting to his friend Mann of his aversion to royalty and to royal persons. He calls the crime of Damien "that least bad of murders, the murder of a king." He hung up in his villa an engraving of the death-warrant of Charles, with the inscription, "*Major Charta*." Yet the most superficial knowledge of history might have taught him that the Restoration, and the crimes and follies of the twenty-eight years which followed the Restoration, were the effects of this Greater Charter. Nor was there much in the means by which that instrument was obtained that could gratify a judicious lover of liberty. A man must hate kings very bitterly before he can think it desirable that the representatives of the people should be turned out of doors by dragoons in order to get at a king's head. Walpole's Whiggism, however, was of a very harmless kind; he kept it, as he kept the old spears

and helmets at Strawberry Hill, merely for show. He would just as soon have thought of taking down the arms of the ancient Templars and Hospitallers from the walls of his hall, and setting off on a crusade to the Holy Land, as of acting in the spirit of those daring warriors and statesmen, great even in their errors, whose names and seals were affixed to the warrant which he prized so highly. He liked revolution and regicide only when they were a hundred years old. His republicanism, like the courage of a bully, or the love of a fribble, was strong and ardent when there was no occasion for it, and subsided when he had an opportunity of bringing it to the proof. As soon as the revolutionary spirit really began to stir in Europe, as soon as the hatred of kings became something more than a sonorous phrase, he was frightened into a fanatical Royalist, and became one of the most extravagant alarmists of those wretched times; in truth, his talk about liberty, whether he knew it or not, was from the beginning a mere cant, the remains of a phraseology which had meant something in the mouths of those from whom he had learned it, but which, in his mouth, meant about as much as the oath by which the knights of some modern orders bind themselves to redress the wrongs of all injured ladies. He had been fed in his boyhood with Whig speculations on government. He must often have seen, at Houghton or in Downing Street, men who had been Whigs when it was as dangerous to be a Whig as to be a highwayman, men



who had voted for the Exclusion Bill, who had been concealed in garrets and cellars after the Battle of Sedgemoor, and who had set their names to the declaration that they would live and die with the Prince of Orange. He had acquired the language of these men, and he repeated it by rote, though it was at variance with all his tastes and feelings, just as some old Jacobite families persisted in praying for the Pretender, and in passing their glasses over the water-decanter when they drank the King's health, long after they had become loyal supporters of the Government of George III. He was a Whig by the accident of hereditary connection, but he was essentially a courtier, and not the less a courtier because he pretended to sneer at the objects which excited his admiration and envy. His real tastes perpetually show themselves through the thin disguise. While professing all the contempt of Bradshaw or Ludlow for crowned heads, he took the trouble to write a book concerning "Royal Authors." He pryed with the utmost anxiety into the most minute particulars relating to the Royal Family. When he was a child he was haunted with a longing to see George I., and gave his mother no peace till she had found a way of gratifying his curiosity. The same feeling, covered with a thousand disguises, attended him to the grave. No observation that dropped from the lips of majesty seemed to him too trifling to be recorded. The French songs of Prince Frederic, compositions certainly not

deserving of preservation on account of their intrinsic merit, have been carefully preserved for us by this contemner of royalty; in truth, every page of Walpole's works bewrays him. This Diogenes, who would be thought to prefer his tub to a palace, and who has nothing to ask of the masters of Windsor and Versailles but that they will stand out of his light, is a gentleman-usher at heart.

He had, it is plain, an uneasy consciousness of the frivolity of his favourite pursuits, and this consciousness produced one of the most diverting of his ten thousand affectations. His busy idleness, his indifference to matters which the world generally regards as important, his passion for trifles, he thought fit to dignify with the name of philosophy. He spoke of himself as of a man whose equanimity was proof to ambitious hopes and fears, who had learned to rate power, wealth, and fame at their true value, and whom the conflict of parties, the rise and fall of statesmen, the ebb and flow of public opinion, moved only to a smile of mingled compassion and disdain. It was owing to the peculiar elevation of his character that he cared about a pinnacle of lath and plaster more than about the Middlesex election, and about a miniature of Grammont more than about the American Revolution. Pitt and Murray might talk themselves hoarse about trifles, but questions of government and war were too insignificant to detain a mind which was occupied in recording the scandal of club-rooms and the whispers of the back-stairs, and

which was even capable of selecting and disposing chairs of ebony and shields of rhinoceros skin.

One of his innumerable whims was an extreme unwillingness to be considered a man of letters, not that he was indifferent to literary fame; far from it. Scarcely any writer has ever troubled himself so much about the appearance which his works were to make before posterity; but he had set his heart on incompatible objects: he wished to be a celebrated author, and yet to be a mere idle gentleman, one of those epicurean gods of the earth who do nothing at all, and who pass their existence in the contemplation of their own perfections. He did not like to have anything in common with the wretches who lodged in the little courts behind St. Martin's Church, and stole out on Sundays to dine with their bookseller. He avoided the society of authors; he spoke with lordly contempt of the most distinguished among them; he tried to find out some way of writing books, as M. Jourdain's father sold cloth, without derogating from his character of *Gentilhomme*: — "Lui, marchand? C'est pure médisance: il ne l'a jamais etc. Tout ce qu'il faisait, c'est qu'il était fort obligeant, fort officieux; et comme il se connaissait fort bien en étoffes, il en allait choisir de tous les côtés, les faisait apporter chez lui, et en donnait à ses amis pour de l'argent." There are several amusing instances of Walpole's feeling on this subject in the letters now before us. Mann had complimented him on the learning which appeared in the "Catalogue

of Royal and Noble Authors," and it is curious to see how impatiently Walpole bore the imputation of having attended to anything so unfashionable as the improvement of his mind:—"I know nothing. How should I? I who have always lived in the big busy world; who lie a-bed all the morning, calling it morning as long as you please; who sup in company; who have played at faro half my life, and now at loo till two and three in the morning; who have always loved pleasure; haunted auctions. . . . How I have laughed when some of the magazines have called me the learned gentleman. Pray don't be like the magazines." This folly might be pardoned in a boy, but a man between forty and fifty years old, as Walpole then was, ought to be quite as much ashamed of playing at loo till three every morning as of being that vulgar thing, a learned gentleman.

The literary character has undoubtedly its full share of faults, and of very serious and offensive faults. If Walpole had avoided those faults, we could have pardoned the fastidiousness with which he declined all fellowship with men of learning; but from those faults Walpole was not one jot more free than the garreteers from whose contact he shrank. Of literary meannesses and literary vices his life and his works contain as many instances as the life and the works of any member of Johnson's club. The fact is, that Walpole had the faults of Grub Street with a large addition from St. James's Street, the vanity, the jealousy, the irritability

of a man of letters, the affected superciliousness and apathy of a man of *ton*.

His judgment of literature, of contemporary literature especially, was altogether perverted by his aristocratical feelings. No writer surely was ever guilty of so much false and absurd criticism. He almost invariably speaks with contempt of those books which are now universally allowed to be the best that appeared in his time ; and, on the other hand, he speaks of writers of rank and fashion as if they were entitled to the same precedence in literature which would have been allowed to them in a drawing-room. In these letters, for example, he says that he would rather have written the most absurd lines in Lee than Thomson's "Seasons." The periodical paper called *The World*, on the other hand, was by "our first writers." Who, then, were the first writers of England in the year 1753? Walpole has told us in a note. Our readers will probably guess that Hume, Fielding, Smollett, Richardson, Johnson, Warburton, Collins, Akenside, Gray, Dyer, Young, Warton, Mason, or some of those distinguished men, were in the list. Not one of them. Our first writers, it seems, were Lord Chesterfield, Lord Bath, Mr. W. Whithed, Sir Charles Williams, Mr. Soame Jenyns, Mr. Cambridge, Mr. Coventry. Of these seven personages, Whithed was the lowest in station, but was the most accomplished tuft-hunter of his time. Coventry was of a noble family. The other five had among them two seats in the House of Lords.

two seats in the House of Commons, three seats in the Privy Council, a baronetcy, a blue riband, a red riband, about a hundred thousand pounds a year, and not ten pages that are worth reading. The writings of Whithed, Cambridge, Coventry, and Lord Bath, are forgotten. Soame Jenyns is remembered chiefly by Johnson's review of the foolish "Essay on the Origin of Evil." Lord Chesterfield stands much lower in the estimation of posterity than he would have done if his letters had never been published. The lampoons of Sir Charles Williams are now read only by the curious, and, though not without occasional flashes of wit, have always seemed to us, we must own, very poor performances.

Walpole judged of French literature after the same fashion. He understood and loved the French language. Indeed, he loved it too well. His style is more deeply tainted with Gallicism than that of any other English writer with whom we are acquainted. His composition often reads, for a page together, like a rude translation from the French. We meet every minute with such sentences as these: "One knows what temperaments Annibal Carracci painted." "The impertinent personage!" "She is dead rich." "Lord Dalkeith is dead of the small-pox in three days." "It will now be seen whether he or they are most patriot."

His love of the French language was of a peculiar kind. He loved it as having been for a century the vehicle of all the polite nothings of Europe, as the

sign by which the freemasons of fashion recognised each other in every capital from Petersburg to Naples, as the language of raillery, as the language of anecdote, as the language of memoirs, as the language of correspondence. - Its higher uses he altogether disregarded. The literature of France has been to ours what Aaron was to Moses—the expositor of great truths, which would else have perished for want of a voice to utter them with distinctness. The relation which existed between Mr. Bentham and M. Dumont is an exact illustration of the intellectual relation in which the two countries stand to each other. The great discoveries in physics, in metaphysics, in political science, are ours. But scarcely any foreign nation except France has received them from us by direct communication. Isolated by our situation, isolated by our manners, we found truth; but we did not impart it. France has been the interpreter between England and mankind.

In the time of Walpole this process of interpretation was in full activity. The great French writers were busy in proclaiming through Europe the names of Bacon, of Newton, and of Locke. The English principles of toleration, the English respect for personal liberty, the English doctrine that all power is a trust for the public good, were making rapid progress. There is scarcely anything in history so interesting as that great stirring up of the mind of France, that shaking of the foundations of all established opinions, that uprooting of old truth and old error. It was

plain that mighty principles were at work, whether for evil or for good. It was plain that a great change in the whole social system was at hand. Fanatics of one kind might anticipate a golden age, in which men should live under the simple dominion of reason, in perfect equality and perfect amity, without property, or marriage, or king, or God. A fanatic of another kind might see nothing in the doctrines of the philosophers but anarchy and atheism, might cling more closely to every old abuse, and might regret the good old days when St. Dominic and Simon de Montfort put down the growing heresies of Provence. A wise man would have seen with regret the excesses into which the reformers were running; but he would have done justice to their genius and to their philanthropy. He would have censured their errors; but he would have remembered that, as Milton has said, error is but opinion in the making. While he condemned their hostility to religion, he would have acknowledged that it was the natural effect of a system under which religion had been constantly exhibited to them in forms which common-sense rejected and at which humanity shuddered. While he condemned some of their political doctrines as incompatible with all law, all property, and all civilisation, he would have acknowledged that the subjects of Louis XV. had every excuse which men could have for being eager to pull down, and for being ignorant of the far higher art of setting up. While anticipating a fierce conflict, s



great and wide-wasting destruction, he would yet have looked forward to the final close with a good hope for France and for mankind.

Walpole had neither hopes nor fears. Though the most Frenchified English writer of the eighteenth century, he troubled himself little about the portents which were daily to be discerned in the French literature of his time. While the most eminent Frenchmen were studying with enthusiastic delight English politics and English philosophy, he was studying as intently the gossip of the old Court of France. The fashions and scandal of Versailles and Marli, fashions and scandal a hundred years old, occupied him infinitely more than a great moral revolution which was taking place in his sight. He took a prodigious interest in every noble sharper whose vast volume of wig and infinite length of ribbon had figured at the dressing or at the tucking up of Louis XIV., and of every profligate woman of quality who had carried her train of lovers backward and forward from king to parliament, and from parliament to king, during the wars of the *Fronde*. These were the people of whom he treasured up the smallest memorial, of whom he loved to hear the most trifling anecdote, and for whose likenesses he would have given any price. Of the great French writers of his own time, Montesquieu is the only one of whom he speaks with enthusiasm. And even of Montesquieu he speaks with less enthusiasm than of that abject thing, Crébillon the younger, a

scribbler as licentious as Louvet and as dull as Rapin. A man must be strangely constituted who can take interest in pedantic journals of the blockades laid by the Duke of A. to the hearts of the Marquise de B. and the Comtesse de C. This trash Walpole extols in language sufficiently high for the merits of Don Quixote. He wished to possess a likeness of Crébillon; and Liotard, the first painter of miniatures then living, was employed to preserve the features of the profligate dunce. The admirer of the *Sopha* and of the *Lettres Athéniennes* had little respect to spare for the men who were then at the head of French literature. He kept carefully out of their way. He tried to keep other people from paying them any attention. He could not deny that Voltaire and Rousseau were clever men; but he took every opportunity of depreciating them. Of D'Alembert he spoke with a contempt which, when the intellectual powers of the two men are compared, seems exquisitely ridiculous. D'Alembert complained that he was accused of having written Walpole's squib against Rousseau. "I hope," says Walpole, "that nobody will attribute D'Alembert's works to me." He was in little danger.

It is impossible to deny, however, that Walpole's writings have real merit, and merit of a very rare though not of a very high, kind. Sir Joshua Reynolds used to say that, though nobody would for a moment compare Claude to Raphael, there would be another Raphael before there was another Claude. And we

own that we expect to see fresh Humes and fresh Burkes before we again fall in with that peculiar combination of moral and intellectual qualities to which the writings of Walpole owe their extraordinary popularity.

It is easy to describe him by negatives. He had not a creative imagination. He had not a pure taste. He was not a great reasoner. There is, indeed, scarcely any writer in whose works it would be possible to find so many contradictory judgments, so many sentences of extravagant nonsense. Nor was it only in his familiar correspondence that he wrote in this flighty and inconsistent manner, but in long and elaborate books, in books repeatedly transcribed and intended for the public eye. We will give an instance or two; for, without instances, readers not very familiar with his works will scarcely understand our meaning. In the "Anecdotes of Painting" he states, very truly, that the art declined after the commencement of the civil wars. He proceeds to inquire why this happened. The explanation, we should have thought, would have been easily found. He might have mentioned the loss of the most munificent and judicious patron that the fine arts ever had in England, the troubled state of the country, the distressed condition of many of the aristocracy, perhaps also the austerity of the victorious party. These circumstances, we conceive, fully account for the phenomenon. But this solution was not odd enough to satisfy Walpole. He discovers another

cause for the decline of the art—the want of models. Nothing worth painting, it seems, was left to paint. “How picturesque,” he exclaims, “was the figure of an Anabaptist!”—as if Puritanism had put out the sun and withered the trees; as if the civil wars had blotted out the expression of character and passion from the human lip and brow; as if many of the men whom Vandyke painted had not been living in the time of the Commonwealth, with faces little the worse for wear; as if many of the beauties afterwards portrayed by Lely were not in their prime before the Restoration; as if the garb or the features of Cromwell and Milton were less picturesque than those of the round-faced peers, as like each other as eggs to eggs, who look out from the middle of the periwigs of Kneller. In the *Memoirs*, again, Walpole sneers at the Prince of Wales, afterwards George III., for presenting a collection of books to one of the American colleges during the Seven Years’ War, and says that, instead of books, his Royal Highness ought to have sent arms and ammunition, as if a war ought to suspend all study and all education, or as if it were the business of the Prince of Wales to supply the colonies with military stores out of his own pocket. We have perhaps dwelt too long on these passages; but we have done so because they are specimens of Walpole’s manner. Everybody who reads his works with attention will find that they swarm with loose and foolish observations like those which we have cited—observations which might

pass in conversation or in a hasty letter, but which are unpardonable in books deliberately written and repeatedly corrected.

He appears to have thought that he saw very far into men; but we are under the necessity of altogether dissenting from his opinion. We do not conceive that he had any power of discerning the finer shades of character. He practised an art, however, which, though easy and even vulgar, obtains for those who practise it the reputation of discernment with ninety-nine people out of a hundred. He sneered at everybody, put on every action the worst construction which it would bear, "spelt every man backward;" to borrow the Lady Hero's phrase,

"Turned every man the wrong side out,  
And never gave to truth and virtue that  
Which simpleness and merit purchaseth."

In this way any man may, with little sagacity and little trouble, be considered by those whose good opinion is not worth having as a great judge of character.

It is said that the hasty and rapacious Kneller used to send away the ladies who sat to him as soon as he had sketched their faces, and to paint the figure and hands from his housemaid. It was in much the same way that Walpole portrayed the minds of others. He copied from the life only those glaring and obvious peculiarities which could not escape the most superficial observation. The rest of the canvas he filled up, in a careless, dashing way, with knave and fool, mixed in

such proportions as pleased Heaven. What a difference between these daubs and the masterly portraits of Clarendon !

There are contradictions without end in the sketches of character which abound in Walpole's works. But if we were to form our opinion of his eminent contemporaries from a general survey of what he has written concerning them, we should say that Pitt was a strutting, ranting, mouthing actor, Charles Townshend an impudent and voluble jack-pudding, Murray a demure, cold-blooded, cowardly hypocrite, Hardwicke an insolent upstart, with the understanding of a pettifogger and the heart of a hangman, Temple an impertinent poltroon, Egmont a solemn coxcomb, Lyttelton a poor creature whose only wish was to go to heaven in a coronet, Onslow a pompous proser, Washington a braggart, Lord Camden sullen, Lord Townshend malevolent, Secker an Atheist who had shammed Christian for a mitre, Whitefield an imposter who swindled his converts out of their watches. The Walpoles fare little better than their neighbours. Old Horace is constantly represented as a coarse, brutal, niggardly buffoon, and his son as worthy of such a father. In short, if we are to trust this discerning judge of human nature, England in his time contained little sense and no virtue, except what was distributed between himself, Lord Waldgrave, and Marshal Conway.

Of such a writer it is scarcely necessary to say that his works are destitute of every charm which is derived

from elevation or from tenderness of sentiment. When he chose to be humane and magnanimous—for he sometimes, by way of variety, tried this affectation—he overdid his part most ludicrously. None of his many disguises sat so awkwardly upon him. For example, he tells us that he did not choose to be intimate with Mr. Pitt. And why? Because Mr. Pitt had been among the persecutors of his father? Or because, as he repeatedly assures us, Mr. Pitt was a disagreeable man in private life? Not at all; but because Mr. Pitt was too fond of war, and was great with too little reluctance. Strange that a habitual scoffer like Walpole should imagine that this cant could impose on the dullest reader! If Molière had put such a speech into the mouth of Tartuffe we should have said that the fiction was unskilful, and that Orgon could not have been such a fool as to be taken in by it. Of the twenty-six years during which Walpole sat in Parliament, thirteen were years of war. Yet he did not, during all those thirteen years, utter a single word or give a single vote tending to peace. His most intimate friend, the only friend, indeed, to whom he appears to have been sincerely attached, Conway, was a soldier, was fond of his profession, and was perpetually entreating Mr. Pitt to give him employment. In this Walpole saw nothing but what was admirable. Conway was a hero for soliciting the command of expeditions which Mr. Pitt was a monster for sending out.

What, then, is the charm, the irresistible charm, of

Walpole's writings? It consists, we think, in the art of amusing without exciting. He never convinces the reason, or fills the imagination, or touches the heart; but he keeps the mind of the reader constantly attentive and constantly entertained. He had a strange ingenuity peculiarly his own, an ingenuity which appeared in all that he did, in his building, in his gardening, in his upholstery, in the matter and in the manner of his writings. If we were to adopt the classification, not a very accurate classification, which Akenside has given of the pleasures of the imagination, we should say that with the Sublime and the Beautiful Walpole had nothing to do, but that the third province, the Odd, was his peculiar domain. The motto which he prefixed to his "Catalogue of Royal and Noble Authors" might have been inscribed with perfect propriety over the door of every room in his house and on the title-page of every one of his books; "Dove diavolo, Messer Ludovico, avete pigliate tante coglionerie?" In his villa every apartment is a museum; every piece of furniture is a curiosity; there is something strange in the form of the shovel; there is a long story belonging to the bell-rope. We wander among a profusion of rarities, of trifling intrinsic value, but so quaint in fashion, or connected with such remarkable names and events that they may well detain our attention for a moment. A moment is enough. Some new relic, some new unique, some new carved work, some new enamel is forthcoming in an instant.



One cabinet of trinkets is no sooner closed than another is opened. It is the same with Walpole's writings. It is not in their utility, it is not in their beauty, that their attraction lies. They are to the works of great historians and poets what Strawberry Hill is to the Museum of Sir Hans Sloane or to the Gallery of Florence. Walpole is constantly showing us things, not of very great value indeed, yet things which we are pleased to see, and which we can see nowhere else. They are baubles; but they are made curiosities either by his grotesque workmanship or by some association belonging to them. His style is one of those peculiar styles by which everybody is attracted, and which nobody can safely venture to imitate. He is a mannerist whose manner has become perfectly easy to him. His affectation is so habitual and so universal that it can hardly be called affectation. The affectation is the essence of the man. It pervades all his thoughts and all his expressions. If it were taken away nothing would be left. He coins new words, distorts the senses of old words, and twists sentences into forms which make grammarians stare. But all this he does, not only with an air of ease, but as if he could not help doing it. His wit was, in its essential properties, of the same kind with that of Cowley and Donne. Like theirs, it consisted in an exquisite perception of points of analogy and points of contrast too subtile for common observation. Like them, Walpole perpetually startles us by the ease with which he yokes together

ideas between which there would seem, at first sight, to be no connection. But he did not, like them, affect the gravity of a lecture, and draw his illustrations from the laboratory and from the schools. His tone was light and fleering; his topics were the topics of the club and the ball-room; and therefore his strange combinations and far-fetched illusions, though very closely resembling those which tire us to death in the poems of the time of Charles I., are read with pleasure constantly new.

No man who has written so much is so seldom tiresome. In his books there are scarcely any of those passages which, in our schooldays, we used to call *skip*. Yet he often wrote on subjects which are generally considered as dull, on subjects which men of great talents have in vain endeavoured to render popular. When we compare the "Historic Doubts about Richard III." with Whitaker's and Chalmers's books on a far more interesting question, the character of Mary Queen of Scots; when we compare the "Anecdotes of Painting" with Nichols's *Anecdotes*, or even with Mr. D'Israeli's "Quarrels of Authors and Calamities of Authors," we at once see Walpole's superiority, not in industry, not in learning, not in accuracy, not in logical power, but in the art of writing what people will like to read. He rejects all but the attractive parts of his subject. He keeps only what is in itself amusing, or what can be made so by the artifice of his diction. The coarser morsels of

antiquarian learning he abandons to others, and sets out an entertainment worthy of a Roman epicure, an entertainment consisting of nothing but delicacies, the brains of singing-birds, the roe of mullets, the sunny halves of peaches. This, we think, is the great merit of his romance. There is little skill in the delineation of the characters. Manfred is as commonplace a tyrant, Jerome as commonplace a confessor, Theodore as commonplace a young gentleman, Isabella and Matilda as commonplace a pair of young ladies as are to be found in any of the thousand Italian castles in which *condottieri* have revelled or in which imprisoned duchesses have pined. We cannot say that we much admire the big man whose sword is dug up in one quarter of the globe, whose helmet drops from the clouds in another, and who, after clattering and rustling for some days, ends by kicking the house down. But the story, whatever its value may be, never flags for a single moment. There are no digressions, or unseasonable descriptions, or long speeches. Every sentence carries the action forward. The excitement is constantly renewed, Absurd as is the machinery, insipid as are the human actors, no reader probably ever thought the book dull.

Walpole's Letters are generally considered as his best performances, and, we think, with reason. His faults are far less offensive to us in his correspondence than in his books. His wild, absurd, and ever-changing opinions about men and things are easily pardoned in familiar letters. His bitter, scoffing, depreciating

disposition does not show itself in so unmitigated a manner as in his Memoirs. A writer of letters must in general be civil and friendly to his correspondent at least, if to no other person.

He loved letter-writing, and had evidently studied it as an art. It was, in truth, the very kind of writing for such a man, for a man very ambitious to rank among wits, yet nervously afraid that, while obtaining the reputation of a wit, he might lose caste as a gentleman. There was nothing vulgar in writing a letter. Not even Ensign Northerton, not even the Captain described in Hamilton's "Bawn" — and Walpole, though the author of many quartos, had some feelings in common with those gallant officers—would have denied that a gentleman might sometimes correspond with a friend. Whether Walpole bestowed much labour on the composition of his letters it is impossible to judge from internal evidence. There are passages which seem perfectly unstudied. But the appearance of ease may be the effect of labour. There are passages which have a very artificial air. But they may have been produced without effort by a mind of which the natural ingenuity had been improved into morbid quickness by constant exercise. We are never sure that we see him as he was. We are never sure that what appears to be nature is not disguised art. We are never sure that what appears to be art is not merely habit which has become second nature.

In wit and animation the present collection is not

superior to those which have preceded it. But it has one great advantage over them all. It forms a connected whole, a regular journal of what appeared to Walpole the most important transactions of the last twenty years of George II.'s reign. It furnishes much new information concerning the history of that time, the portion of English history of which common readers know the least.

The earlier letters contain the most lively and interesting account which we possess of that "great Walpolean battle," to use the words of Junius, which terminated in the retirement of Sir Robert. Horace entered the House of Commons just in time to witness the last desperate struggle which his father, surrounded by enemies and traitors, maintained, with a spirit as brave as that of the column of Fontenoy, first for victory, and then for honourable retreat. Horace was, of course, on the side of his family. Lord Dover seems to have been enthusiastic on the same side, and goes so far as to call Sir Robert "the glory of the Whigs."

Sir Robert deserved this high eulogium, we think, as little as he deserved the abusive epithets which have often been coupled with his name. A fair character of him still remains to be drawn; and, whenever it shall be drawn, it will be equally unlike the portrait by Coxe and the portrait by Smollett.

He had, undoubtedly, great talents and great virtues. He was not, indeed, like the leaders of the party which

opposed his Government, a brilliant orator. He was not a profound scholar, like Carteret, or a wit and a fine gentleman, like Chesterfield. In all these respects his deficiencies were remarkable. His literature consisted of a scrap or two of Horace and an anecdote or two from the end of the Dictionary. His knowledge of history was so limited that, in the great debate on the Excise Bill, he was forced to ask Attorney-General Yorke who Empson and Dudley were. His manners were a little too coarse and boisterous even for that age of Westerns and Topehalls. When he ceased to talk of politics, he could talk of nothing but women; and he dilated on his favourite theme with a freedom which shocked even that plain-spoken generation, and which was quite unsuited to his age and station. The noisy revelry of his summer festivities at Houghton gave much scandal to grave people, and annually drove his kinsman and colleague, Lord Townshend, from the neighbouring mansion of Rainham.

But, however ignorant Walpole might be of general history and of general literature, he was better acquainted than any man of his day with what it concerned him most to know, mankind, the English nation, the Court, the House of Commons, and the Treasury. Of foreign affairs he knew little; but his judgment was so good that his little knowledge went very far. He was an excellent parliamentary debater, an excellent parliamentary tactician, and an excellent man

of business. No man ever brought more industry or more method to the transacting of affairs. No minister in his time did so much ; yet no minister had so much leisure.

He was a good-natured man who had during thirty years seen nothing but the worst parts of human nature in other men. He was familiar with the malice of kind people, and the perfidy of honourable people. Proud men had licked the dust before him. Patriots had begged him to come up to the price of their puffed and advertised integrity. He said after his fall that it was a dangerous thing to be a minister, that there were few minds which would not be injured by the constant spectacle of meanness and depravity. To his honour it must be confessed that few minds have come out of such a trial so little damaged in the most important parts. He retired, after more than twenty years of power, with a temper not soured, with a heart not hardened, with simple tastes, with frank manners, and with a capacity for friendship. No stain of treachery, of ingratitude, or of cruelty, rests on his memory. Factious hatred, while flinging on his name every other foul aspersion, was compelled to own that he was not a man of blood. This would scarcely seem a high eulogium on a statesman of our times. It was then a rare and honourable distinction. The contests of parties in England had long been carried on with a ferocity unworthy of a civilised people. Sir Robert Walpole was the minister who gave to our Government

that character of lenjty which it has since generally preserved. It was perfectly known to him that many of his opponents had dealings with the Pretender. The lives of some were at his mercy. He wanted neither Whig nor Tory precedents for using his advantage unsparingly. But with a clemency to which posterity has never done justice, he suffered himself to be thwarted, vilified, and at last overthrown, by a party which included many men whose necks were in his power.

That he practised corruption on a large scale is, we think, indisputable. But whether he deserves all the invectives which have been uttered against him on that account may be questioned. No man ought to be severely censured for not being beyond his age in virtue. To buy the votes of constituents is as immoral as to buy the votes of representatives. The candidate who gives five guineas to the freeman is as culpable as the man who gives three hundred guineas to the member. Yet we know that, in our own time, no man is thought wicked or dishonourable, no man is cut, no man is blackballed, because, under the old system of election, he was returned, in the only way in which he could be returned, for East Retford, for Liverpool, or for Stafford. Walpole governed by corruption because, in his time, it was impossible to govern otherwise. Corruption was unnecessary to the Tudors, for their Parliaments were feeble. The publicity which has of late years been given to parliamentary proceedings has



raised the standard of morality among public men. The power of public opinion is so great that, even before the reform of the representation, a faint suspicion that a minister had given pecuniary gratifications to members of Parliament in return for their votes would have been enough to ruin him. But, during the century which followed the Restoration, the House of Commons was in that situation in which assemblies must be managed by corruption or cannot be managed at all. It was not held in awe, as in the sixteenth century, by the throne. It was not held in awe, as in the nineteenth century, by the opinion of the people. Its constitution was oligarchical. Its deliberations were secret. Its power in the State was immense. The Government had every conceivable motive to offer bribes. Many of the members, if they were not men of strict honour and probity, had no conceivable motive to refuse what the Government offered. In the reign of Charles II., accordingly, the practice of buying votes in the House of Commons was commenced by the daring Clifford, and carried to a great extent by the crafty and shameless Danby. The Revolution; great and manifold as were the blessings of which it was directly or remotely the cause, at first aggravated this evil. The importance of the House of Commons was now greater than ever. The prerogatives of the Crown were more strictly limited than ever; and those associations in which, more than in its legal prerogatives, its power had

consisted, were completely broken. No prince was ever in so helpless and distressing a situation as William III. The party which defended his title was, on general grounds, disposed to curtail his prerogative. The party which was, on general grounds, friendly to prerogative, was adverse to his title. There was no quarter in which both his office and his person could find favour. But while the influence of the House of Commons in the Government was becoming paramount, the influence of the people over the House of Commons was declining. It mattered little in the time of Charles I. whether that House were or were not chosen by the people: it was certain to act for the people, because it would have been at the mercy of the Court but for the support of the people. Now that the Court was at the mercy of the House of Commons, those members who were not returned by popular election had nobody to please but themselves. Even those who were returned by popular election did not live, as now, under a constant sense of responsibility. The constituents were not, as now, daily apprised of the votes and speeches of their representatives. The privileges which had in old times been indispensably necessary to the security and efficiency of Parliaments were now superfluous. But they were still carefully maintained, by honest legislators from superstitious veneration, by dishonest legislators for their own selfish ends. They had been a useful defence to the Commons during a long and doubtful

conflict with powerful sovereigns. They were now no longer necessary for that purpose; and they became a defence to the members against their constituents. That secrecy which had been absolutely necessary in times when the Privy Council was in the habit of sending the leaders of Opposition to the Tower was preserved in times when a vote of the House of Commons was sufficient to hurl the most powerful minister from his post.

The Government could not go on unless the Parliament could be kept in order. And how was the Parliament to be kept in order? Three hundred years ago it would have been enough for a statesman to have the support of the Crown. It would now, we hope and believe, be enough for him to enjoy the confidence and approbation of the great body of the middle class. A hundred years ago it would not have been enough to have both Crown and people on his side. The Parliament had shaken off the control of the Royal prerogative. It had not yet fallen under the control of public opinion. A large proportion of the members had absolutely no motive to support any administration except their own interest, in the lowest sense of the word. Under these circumstances, the country could be governed only by corruption. Bolingbroke, who was the ablest and the most vehement of those who raised the clamour against corruption, had no better remedy to propose than that the Royal prerogative should be strengthened. The remedy would no doubt

have been efficient. The only question is, whether it would not have been worse than the disease. The fault was in the constitution of the Legislature; and to blame those ministers who managed the Legislature in the only way in which it could be managed is gross injustice. They submitted to extortion because they could not help themselves. We might as well accuse the poor Lowland farmers who paid black mail to Rob Roy of corrupting the virtue of the Highlanders, as accuse Sir Robert Walpole of corrupting the virtue of Parliament. His crime was merely this, that he employed his money more dexterously, and got more support in return for it, than any of those who preceded or followed him.

He was himself incorruptible by money. His dominant passion was the love of power: and the heaviest charge which can be brought against him is that to this passion he never scrupled to sacrifice the interests of his country.

One of the maxims which, as his son tells us he was most in the habit of repeating was, *quieta non movere*. It was indeed the maxim by which he generally regulated his public conduct. It is the maxim of a man more solicitous to hold power long than to use it well. It is remarkable that, though he was at the head of affairs during more than twenty years, not one great measure, not one important change for the better or for the worse in any part of our institutions, marks the period of his supremacy. Nor was this because he did not clearly

see that many changes were very desirable. He had been brought up in the school of toleration, at the feet of Somers and of Burnet. He disliked the shameful laws against Dissenters. But he never could be induced to bring forward a proposition for repealing them. The sufferers represented to him the injustice with which they were treated, boasted of their firm attachment to the House of Brunswick and to the Whig party, and reminded him of his own repeated declarations of good will to their cause. He listened, assented, promised, and did nothing. At length, the question was brought forward by others, and the Minister, after a hesitating and evasive speech, voted against it. The truth was that he remembered to the latest day of his life that terrible explosion of high church feeling which the foolish prosecution of a foolish parson had occasioned in the days of Queen Anne. If the Dissenters had been turbulent he would probably have relieved them; but while he apprehended no danger from them, he would not run the slightest risk for their sake. He acted in the same manner with respect to other questions. He knew the state of the Scotch Highlands. He was constantly predicting another insurrection in that part of the empire. Yet, during his long tenure of power, he never attempted to perform what was then the most obvious and pressing duty of a British statesman, to break the power of the chiefs, and to establish the authority of law through the furthest corners of the island.

Nobody knew better than he that, if this were not done, great mischiefs would follow. But the Highlands were tolerably quiet in his time. He was content to meet daily emergencies by daily expedients; and he left the rest to his successors. They had to conquer the Highlands in the midst of a war with France and Spain, because he had not regulated the Highlands in a time of profound peace.

Sometimes, in spite of all his caution, he found that measures which he had hoped to carry through quietly had caused great agitation. When this was the case he generally modified or withdrew them. It was thus that he cancelled Wood's patent in compliance with the absurd outcry of the Irish. It was thus that he frittered away the Porteous Bill to nothing, for fear of exasperating the Scotch. It was thus that he abandoned the Excise Bill, as soon as he found that it was offensive to all the great towns of England. The language which he held about that measure in a subsequent session is strikingly characteristic. Pulteney had insinuated that the scheme would be again brought forward. "As to the wicked scheme," said Walpole, "as the gentleman is pleased to call it, which he would persuade gentlemen is not yet laid aside, I for my part assure this House I am not so mad as ever again to engage in anything that looks like an Excise; though, in my private opinion, I still think it was a scheme that would have tended very much to the interest of the nation."

The conduct of Walpole with regard to the Spanish war is the great blemish of his public life. Archdeacon Coxe imagined that he had discovered one grand principle of action to which the whole public conduct of his hero ought to be referred. "Did the administration of Walpole," says the biographer, "present any uniform principle which may be traced in every part, and which gave combination and consistency to the whole? Yes, and that principle was, **THE LOVE OF PEACE.**" It would be difficult, we think, to bestow a higher eulogium on any statesman. But the eulogium is far too high for the merits of Walpole. The great ruling principle of his public conduct was indeed a love of peace, but not in the sense in which Archdeacon Coxe uses the phrase. The peace which Walpole sought was not the peace of the country, but the peace of his own administration. During the greater part of his public life, indeed, the two objects were inseparably connected. At length he was reduced to the necessity of choosing between them, of plunging the State into hostilities for which there was no just ground, and by which nothing was to be got, or of facing a violent opposition in the country, in Parliament, and even in the royal closet. No person was more thoroughly convinced than he of the absurdity of the cry against Spain. But his darling power was at stake, and his choice was soon made. He preferred an unjust war to a stormy session. It is impossible to say of a Minister

who acted thus that the love of peace was the one grand principle to which all his conduct is to be referred. The governing principle of his conduct was neither love of peace nor love of war, but love of power.

The praise to which he is fairly entitled is this, that he understood the true interest of his country better than any of his contemporaries, and that he pursued that interest whenever it was not incompatible with the interest of his own intense and grasping ambition. It was only in matters of public moment that he shrank from agitation and had recourse to compromise. In his contests for personal influence there was no timidity, no flinching. He would have all or none. Every member of the Government who would not submit to his ascendancy was turned out or forced to resign. Liberal of everything else, he was avaricious of nothing but power. Cautious everywhere else, when power was at stake, he had all the boldness of Richelieu or Chatham. He might easily have secured his authority if he could have been induced to divide it with others. But he would not part with one fragment of it to purchase defenders for all the rest. The effect of this policy was that he had able enemies and feeble allies. His most distinguished coadjutors left him one by one, and joined the ranks of the Opposition. He faced the increasing array of his enemies with unbroken spirit, and thought it far better that



they should attack his power than that they should share it.

The Opposition was in every sense formidable. At its head were two royal personages, the exiled head of the House of Stuart, the disgraced heir of the House of Brunswick. One set of members received directions from Avignon. Another set held their consultations and banquets at Norfolk House. The majority of the landed gentry, the majority of the parochial clergy, one of the universities, and a strong party in the City of London and in the other great towns, were decidedly adverse to the Government. Of the men of letters, some were exasperated by the neglect with which the Minister treated them, a neglect which was the more remarkable, because his predecessors, both Whig and Tory, had paid court with emulous munificence to the wits and the poets; others were honestly inflamed by party zeal; almost all lent their aid to the Opposition. In truth, all that was alluring to ardent and imaginative minds was on that side; old associations, new visions of political improvement, high-flown theories of loyalty, high-flown theories of liberty, the enthusiasm of the Cavalier, the enthusiasm of the Roundhead. The Tory gentleman, fed in the common-rooms of Oxford with the doctrines of Filmer and Sacheverell, and proud of the exploits of his great-grandfather, who had charged with Rupert at Marston, who had held out the old manor-house against Fairfax, and who,

after the King's return, had been set down for a Knight of the Royal Oak, flew to that section of the Opposition which, under pretence of assailing the existing administration, was, in truth, assailing the reigning dynasty. The young Republican, fresh from his Livy and his Lucan, and glowing with admiration of Hampden, of Russell, and of Sydney, hastened with equal eagerness to those benches from which eloquent voices thundered nightly against the tyranny and perfidy of courts. So many young politicians were caught by these declamations that Sir Robert, in one of his best speeches, observed that the Opposition consisted of three bodies, the Tories, the discontented Whigs, who were known by the name of the Patriots, and the Boys. In fact, almost every young man of warm temper and lively imagination, whatever his political bias might be, was drawn into the party adverse to the Government; and some of the most distinguished among them, Pitt, for example, among public men, and Johnson, among men of letters, afterwards openly acknowledged their mistake.

The aspect of the Opposition, even while it was still a minority in the House of Commons, was very imposing. Among those who, in Parliament or out of Parliament, assailed the administration of Walpole, were Bolingbroke, Carteret, Chesterfield, Argyle, Pulteney, Wyndham, Doddington, Pitt, Lyttelton, Barnard, Pope, Swift, Gay, Arbuthnot, Fielding, Johnson, Thomson, Akenside, Glover.

The circumstance that the Opposition was divided into two parties, diametrically opposed to each other in political opinions, was long the safety of Walpole; it was at last his ruin. The leaders of the minority knew that it would be difficult for them to bring forward any important measure without producing an immediate schism in their party. It was with very great difficulty that the Whigs in opposition had been induced to give a sullen and silent vote for the repeal of the Septennial Act. The Tories, on the other hand, could not be induced to support Pulteney's motion for an addition to the income of Prince Frederic. The two parties had cordially joined in calling out for a war with Spain, but they now had their war. Hatred of Walpole was almost the only feeling which was common to them. On this one point, therefore, they concentrated their whole strength. With gross ignorance, or gross dishonesty, they represented the Minister as the main grievance of the State; his dismissal, his punishment, would prove the certain cure for all the evils which the nation suffered. What was to be done after his fall, how misgovernment was to be prevented in future, were questions to which there were as many answers as there were noisy and ill-informed members of the Opposition. The only cry in which all could join was, "Down with Walpole!" So much did they narrow the disputed ground, so purely personal did they make the question, that they threw out friendly hints to the other members of the Administration, and declared that

they refused quarter to the Prime Minister alone; his tools might keep their heads, their fortunes, even their places, if only the great father of corruption were given up to the just vengeance of the nation.

If the fate of Walpole's colleagues had been inseparably bound up with his, he probably would, even after the unfavourable elections of 1741, have been able to weather the storm; but as soon as it was understood that the attack was directed against him alone, and that if he were sacrificed his associates might expect advantageous and honourable terms, the ministerial ranks began to waver, and the murmur of *sauve qui peut* was heard. That Walpole had foul play is almost certain, but to what extent it is difficult to say. Lord Islay was suspected; the Duke of Newcastle something more than suspected. It would have been strange, indeed, if his Grace had been idle when treason was hatching:—

“ Ch' i' ho de' traditor' sempre sospetto,  
E Gan fu traditor prima che nato.”

“ His name,” said Sir Robert, “ is perfidy.”

Never was a battle more manfully fought out than the last struggle of the old statesman; his clear judgment, his long experience, and his fearless spirit, enabled him to maintain a defensive war through half the session. To the last his heart never failed him; and, when at last he yielded, he yielded not to the threats of his enemies, but to the entreaties of his

dispirited and refractory followers. When he could no longer retain his power, he compounded for honour and security, and retired to his garden and his paintings, leaving to those who had overthrown him shame, discord, and ruin.

Everything was in confusion. It has been said that the confusion was produced by the dexterous policy of Walpole; and, undoubtedly, he did his best to sow dissension amongst his triumphant enemies, but there was little for him to do. Victory had completely dissolved the hollow truce which the two sections of the Opposition had but imperfectly observed, even while the event of the contest was still doubtful. A thousand questions were opened in a moment, a thousand conflicting claims were preferred. It was impossible to follow any line of policy which would not have been offensive to a large portion of the successful party; it was impossible to find places for a tenth part of those who thought that they had a right to office. While the parliamentary leaders were preaching patience and confidence, while their followers were clamouring for reward, a still louder voice was heard from without, the terrible cry of a people angry, they hardly knew with whom, and impatient, they hardly knew for what. The day of retribution had arrived; the Opposition reaped that which they had sown. Inflamed with hatred and cupidity, despairing of success by any ordinary mode of political warfare, and blind to consequences which, though remote, were certain, they had

conjured up a devil whom they could not lay. They had made the public mind drunk with calumny and declamation; they had raised expectations which it was impossible to satisfy. The downfall of Walpole was to be the beginning of a political millennium, and every enthusiast had figured to himself that millennium according to the fashion of his own wishes. The Republican expected that the power of the Crown would be reduced to a mere shadow, the high Tory that the Stuarts would be restored, the moderate Tory that the golden days which the Church and the landed interest had enjoyed during the last years of Queen Anne would immediately return. It would have been impossible to satisfy everybody. The conquerors satisfied nobody.

We have no reverence for the memory of those who were then called the Patriots. We are for the principles of good government against Walpole, and for Walpole against the Opposition. It was most desirable that a purer system should be introduced; but, if the old system was to be retained, no man was so fit as Walpole to be at the head of affairs. There were grievous abuses in the Government, abuses more than sufficient to justify a strong Opposition; but the party opposed to Walpole, while they stimulated the popular fury to the highest point, were at no pains to direct it aright; indeed, they studiously misdirected it. They misrepresented the evil; they prescribed inefficient and pernicious remedies; they held up a single man as the

sole cause of all the vices of a bad system, which had been in full operation before his entrance into public life, and which continued to be in full operation when some of these very brawlers had succeeded to his power; they thwarted his best measures; they drove him into an unjustifiable war against his will. Constantly talking in magnificent language about tyranny, corruption, wicked ministers, servile courtiers, the liberty of Englishmen, the Great Charter, the rights for which our fathers bled — Timoleon, Brutus, Hampden, Sydney—they had absolutely nothing to propose which would have been an improvement on our institutions. Instead of directing the public mind to definite reforms which might have completed the work of the Revolution, which might have brought the Legislature into harmony with the nation, and which might have prevented the Crown from doing by influence what it could no longer do by prerogative, they excited a vague craving for change, by which they profited for a single moment, and of which, as they well deserved, they were soon the victims.

Among the reforms which the State then required, there were two of paramount importance, two which would alone have remedied almost every gross abuse, and without which all other remedies would have been unavailing—the publicity of parliamentary proceedings and the abolition of the rotten boroughs. Neither of these was thought of. It seems to us clear that, if these were not adopted, all other measures would have

been illusory. Some of the patriots suggested changes which would, beyond all doubt, have increased the existing evils a hundredfold. These men wished to transfer the disposal of employments and the command of the army from the Crown to the Parliament; and this on the very ground that the Parliament had long been a grossly corrupt body. The security against malpractices was to be that the members, instead of having a portion of the public plunder doled out to them by a Minister, were to help themselves.

The other schemes of which the public mind was full were less dangerous than this. Some of them were in themselves harmless. But none of them would have done much good, and most of them were extravagantly absurd. What they were we may learn from the instructions which many constituent bodies, immediately after the change of administration, sent up to their representatives. A more deplorable collection of follies can hardly be imagined. There is, in the first place, a general cry for Walpole's head. Then there are bitter complaints of the decay of trade, a decay which, in the judgment of these enlightened politicians, was brought about by Walpole and corruption. They would have been nearer to the truth if they had attributed their sufferings to the war into which they had driven Walpole against his better judgment. He had foretold the effects of his unwilling concession. On the day when hostilities against Spain were proclaimed, when the heralds were attended into the City by the



chiefs of the Opposition, when the Prince of Wales himself stopped at Temple Bar to drink success to the English arms, the Minister heard all the steeples of the City jingling with a merry peal, and muttered, "They may ring the bells now: they will be wringing their hands before long."

Another grievance, for which of course Walpole and corruption were answerable, was the great exportation of English wool. In the judgment of the sagacious electors of several large towns, the remedying of this evil was a matter second only in importance to the hanging of Sir Robert. There were also earnest injunctions that the members should vote against standing armies in time of peace, injunctions which were, to say the least, ridiculously unseasonable in the midst of a war which was likely to last, and which did actually last as long as the Parliament. The repeal of the Septennial Act, as was to be expected, was strongly pressed. Nothing was more natural than that the voters should wish for a triennial recurrence of their bribes and their ale. We feel firmly convinced that the repeal of the Septennial Act, unaccompanied by a complete reform of the constitution of the elective body, would have been an unmixed curse to the country. The only rational recommendation which we can find in all these instructions is, that the number of placemen in Parliament should be limited, and that pensioners should not be allowed to sit there. It is plain, however, that this cure was far from going to the root of the evil, and

that, if it had been adopted without other reforms, secret bribery would probably have been more practised than ever.

We will give one more instance of the absurd expectations which the declamations of the Opposition had raised in the country. Akenside was one of the fiercest and most uncompromising of the young patriots out of Parliament. When he found that the change of administration had produced no change of system, he gave vent to his indignation in the "Epistle to Curio," the best poem that he ever wrote, a poem, indeed, which seems to indicate that, if he had left lyric composition to Gray and Collins, and had employed his powers in grave and elevated satire, he might have disputed the pre-eminence of Dryden. But whatever be the literary merits of the epistle, we can say nothing in praise of the political doctrines which it inculcates. The poet, in a rapturous apostrophe to the spirits of the great men of antiquity, tells us what he expected from Pulteney, at the moment of the fall of the tyrant.

"See private life by wisest arts reclaimed,  
See ardent youth to noblest manners framed,  
See us achieve whate'er was sought by you,  
If Curio—only Curio—will be true."

It was Pulteney's business, it seems, to abolish faro and masquerades, to stint the young Duke of Marlborough to a bottle of brandy a day, and to prevail on Lady Vane to be content with three lovers at a time.

Whatever the people wanted, they certainly got nothing. Walpole retired in safety; and the multitude were defrauded of the expected show on Tower Hill. The Septennial Act was not repealed. The placemen were not turned out of the House of Commons. Wool, we believe, was still exported. "Private life" afforded as much scandal as if the reign of Walpole and corruption had continued; and "ardent youth" fought with watchmen and betted with blacklegs as much as ever.

The colleagues of Walpole had, after his retreat, admitted some of the chiefs of the Opposition into the the Government. They soon found themselves compelled to submit to the ascendancy of one of their new allies. This was Lord Carteret, afterwards Earl Granville. No public man of that age had greater courage, greater ambition, greater activity, greater talents for debate, or for declamation. No public man had such profound and extensive learning. He was familiar with the ancient writers, and loved to sit up till midnight discussing philological and metrical questions with Bentley. His knowledge of modern languages was prodigious. The Privy Council, when he was present, needed no interpreter. He spoke and wrote French, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, German, even Swedish. He had pushed his researches into the most obscure nooks of literature. He was as familiar with Canonists and Schoolmen as with orators and poets. He had read all that the universities of Saxony

and Holland had produced on the most intricate questions of public law. Harte, in the preface to the second edition of his "History of Gustavus Adolphus," bears a remarkable testimony to the extent and accuracy of Lord Carteret's knowledge. "It was my good fortune or prudence to keep the main body of my army (or, in other words, my matters of fact) safe and entire. The late Earl of Granville was pleased to declare himself of 'his opinion; especially when he found 'that I had made Chemnitius one of my principal guides; for his lordship was apprehensive I might not have seen that valuable and authentic book, which is extremely scarce. I thought myself happy to have contented his Lordship even in the lowest degree: for he understood the German and Swedish histories to the highest perfection."

With all this learning Carteret was far from being a pedant. His was not one of those cold spirits of which the fire is put out by the fuel. In council, in debate, in society, he was all life and energy. His measures were strong, prompt, and daring, his oratory animated and glowing. His spirits were constantly high. No misfortune, public or private, could depress him. He was at once the most unlucky and the happiest public man of his time.

He had been Secretary of State in Walpole's administration, and had acquired considerable influence over the mind of George I. The other Ministers could speak no German. The king could speak no

English. All the communications that Walpole held with his master was in very bad Latin. Carteret dismayed his colleagues by the volubility with which he addressed his Majesty in German. They listened with envy and terror to the mysterious gutturals which might possibly convey suggestions very little in unison with their wishes.

Walpole was not a man to endure such a colleague as Carteret. The King was induced to give up his favourite. Carteret joined the Opposition, and signalled himself at the head of that party till, after the retirement of his old rival, he again became Secretary of State.

During some months he was chief Minister, indeed sole Minister. He gained the confidence and regard of George II. He was at the same time in high favour with the Prince of Wales. As a debater in the House of Lords he had no equal among his colleagues. Among his opponents, Chesterfield alone could be considered as his match. Confident in his talents and in the royal favour, he neglected all those means by which the power of Walpole had been created and maintained. His head was full of treaties and expeditions, of schemes for supporting the Queen of Hungary and for humbling the House of Bourbon. He contemptuously abandoned to others all the drudgery, and with the drudgery, all the fruits of corruption. The patronage of the Church and of the Bar he left to the Pelhams as a trifle unworthy of his care. One of the

judges, Chief Justice Willes, if we remember rightly, went to him to beg some ecclesiastical preferment for a friend. Carteret said that he was too much occupied with Continental politics to think about the disposal of places and benefices. "You may rely on it, then," said the Chief Justice, "that people who want places and benefices will go to those who have more leisure." The prediction was accomplished. It would have been a busy time indeed in which the Pelhams had wanted leisure for jobbing, and to the Pelhams the whole cry of place-hunters and pension-hunters resorted. The parliamentary influence of the two brothers became stronger every day, till at length they were at the head of a decided majority in the House of Commons. Their rival, meanwhile, conscious of his powers, sanguine in his hopes, and proud of the storm which he had conjured upon the Continent, would brook neither superior nor equal. "His rants," says Horace Walpole, "are amazing, so are his parts and his spirits." He encountered the opposition of his colleagues, not with the fierce haughtiness of the first Pitt, or the cold unbending arrogance of the second, but with a gay vehemence, a good-humoured imperiousness, that bore everything down before it. The period of his ascendancy was known by the name of the "Drunken Administration;" and the expression was not altogether figurative. His habits were extremely convivial, and champagne probably lent its aid to keep him in that state of joyous excitement in which his life was passed

That a rash and impetuous man of genius like Carteret should not have been able to maintain his ground in Parliament against the crafty and selfish Pelhams is not strange. But it is less easy to understand why he should have been generally unpopular throughout the country. His brilliant talents, his bold and open temper, ought, it should seem, to have made him a favourite with the public. But the people had been bitterly disappointed, and he had to face the first burst of their rage. His close connection with Pulteney, now the most detested man in the nation, was an unfortunate circumstance. He had, indeed, only three partisans, Pulteney, the King, and the Prince of Wales, a most singular assemblage.

He was driven from his office. He shortly after made a bold, indeed a desperate, attempt to recover power. The attempt failed. From that time he relinquished all ambitious hopes, and retired laughing to his books and his bottle. No statesman ever enjoyed success with so exquisite a relish, or submitted to defeat with so genuine and unforced a cheerfulness. Ill as he had been used he did not seem, says Horace Walpole, to have any resentment, or indeed any feeling, except thirst.

These letters contain many good stories, some of them no doubt grossly exaggerated, about Lord Carteret; how, in the height of his greatness, he fell in love at first sight on a birthday with Lady Sophia Fermor, the handsome daughter of Lord Pomfret; how he

plagued the Cabinet every day with reading to them her ladyship's letters; how strangely he brought home his bride; what fine jewels he gave her; how he fondled her at Ranelagh; and what queen-like state she kept in Arlington Street. Horace Walpole has spoken less bitterly of Carteret than of any public man of that time, Fox, perhaps, excepted; and this is the more remarkable, because Carteret was one of the most inveterate enemies of Sir Robert. In the *Memoirs*, Horace Walpole, after passing in review all the great men whom England had produced within his memory, concludes by saying, that in genius none of them equalled Lord Granville. Smollett, in "*Humphrey Clinker*," pronounces a similar judgment in coarser language. "Since Granville was turned out there has been no minister in this nation worth the meal that whitened his periwig."

Carteret fell, and the reign of the Pelhams commenced. It was Carteret's misfortune to be raised to power when the public mind was still smarting from recent disappointment. The nation had been duped, and was eager for revenge. A victim was necessary, and on such occasions the victims of popular rage are selected like the victim of Jephthah. The first person who comes in the way is made the sacrifice. The wrath of the people had now spent itself; and the unnatural excitement was succeeded by an unnatural calm. To an irrational eagerness for something new, succeeded an equally irrational disposition to acquiesce in every-



thing established. A few months back the people had been disposed to impute every crime to men in power, and to lend a ready ear to the high professions of men in opposition. They were now disposed to surrender themselves implicitly to the management of Ministers, and to look with suspicion and contempt on all who pretended to public spirit. The name of patriot had become a by-word of derision. Horace Walpole scarcely exaggerated when he said that, in those times, the most popular declaration which a candidate could make on the hustings was that he had never been and never would be a patriot. At this conjuncture took place the rebellion of the Highland clans. The alarm produced by that event quieted the strife of internal factions. The suppression of the insurrection crushed for ever the spirit of the Jacobite party. Room was made in the Government for a few Tories. Peace was patched up with France and Spain. Death removed the Prince of Wales, who had contrived to keep together a small portion of that formidable opposition of which he had been the leader in the time of Sir Robert Walpole. Almost every man of weight in the House of Commons was officially connected with the Government. The even tenor of the session of Parliament was ruffled only by an occasional harangue from Lord Egmont on the Army estimates. For the first time since the accession of the Stuarts there was no opposition. This singular good fortune, denied to the ablest statesmen, to Salisbury, to Strafford, to Clarendon,

to Somers, to Walpole, had been reserved for the Pelhams.

Henry Pelham, it is true, was by no means a contemptible person. His understanding was that of Walpole on a somewhat smaller scale. Though not a brilliant orator, he was, like his master, a good debater, a good parliamentary tactician, a good man of business. Like his master, he distinguished himself by the neatness and clearness of his financial expositions. Here the resemblance ceased. Their characters were altogether dissimilar. Walpole was good-humoured, but would have his way; his spirits were high, and his manners frank even to coarseness. The temper of Pelham was yielding, but peevish: his habits were regular, and his deportment strictly decorous. Walpole was constitutionally fearless, Pelham constitutionally timid. Walpole had to face a strong opposition; but no man in the Government durst wag a finger against him. Almost all the opposition which Pelham had to encounter was from members of the Government of which he was the head. His own Paymaster spoke against his estimates. His own Secretary-at-War spoke against his Regency Bill. In one day Walpole turned Lord Chesterfield, Lord Burlington, and Lord Clinton out of the royal household, dismissed the highest dignitaries of Scotland from their posts, and took away the regiments of the Duke of Bolton and Lord Cobham, because he suspected them of having encouraged the resistance to his Excise Bill. He

would far rather have contended with the strongest minority, under the ablest leaders, than have tolerated mutiny in his own party. It would have gone hard with any of his colleagues who had ventured, on a Government question, to divide the House of Commons against him. Pelham, on the other hand, was disposed to bear anything rather than drive from office any man round whom a new opposition could form. He therefore endured with fretful patience the insubordination of Pitt and Fox. He thought it far better to connive at their occasional infractions of discipline than to hear them, night after night, thundering against corruption and wicked ministers from the other side of the House.

We wonder that Sir Walter Scott never tried his hand on the Duke of Newcastle. An interview between his Grace and Jeanie Deans would have been delightful, and by no means unnatural. There is scarcely any public man in our history of whose manners and conversation so many particulars have been preserved. Single stories may be unfounded or exaggerated. But all the stories about him, whether told by people who were perpetually seeing him in Parliament and attending his levee in Lincoln's Inn Fields, or by Grub Street writers who never had more than a glimpse of his star through the windows of his gilded coach, are of the same character. Horace Walpole and Smollett differed in their tastes and opinions as much as two human beings could differ. They kept quite different society. The one played at cards with

countesses, and corresponded with ambassadors. The other passed his life surrounded by printers' devils and famished scribblers. Yet Walpole's Duke and Smollett's Duke are as like as if they were both from one hand. Smollett's Newcastle runs out of his dressing-room, with his face covered with soap-suds, to embrace the Moorish envoy. Walpole's Newcastle pushes his way into the Duke of Grafton's sick room to kiss the old nobleman's plasters. No man was ever so unmercifully satirised. But in truth he was himself a satire ready made. All that the art of the satirist does for other men, nature had done for him. Whatever was absurd about him stood out with grotesque prominence from the rest of the character. He was a living, moving, talking, caricature. His gait was a shuffling trot; his utterance a rapid stutter; he was always in a hurry; he was never in time; he abounded in fulsome caresses and in hysterical tears. His oratory resembled that of Justice Shallow. It was nonsense effervescent with animal spirits and impertinence. Of his ignorance many anecdotes remain, some well authenticated, some probably invented at coffee-houses, but all exquisitely characteristic. "Oh—yes—yes—to be sure—Annapolis must be defended—troops must be sent to Annapolis—Pray where is Annapolis?"—"Cape Breton an island! wonderful!—show it me in the map. So it is, sure enough. My dear sir, you always bring us good news. I must go and tell the King that Cape Breton is an island."

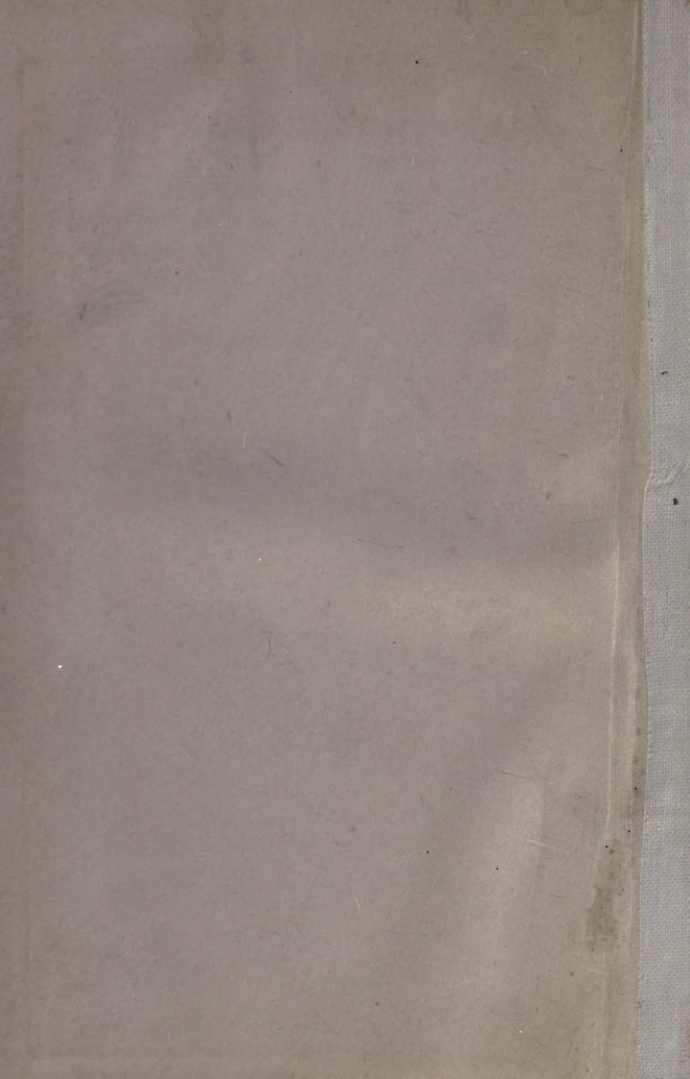
And this man was, during near thirty years, Secretary of State, and, during near ten years, First Lord of the Treasury! His large fortune, his strong hereditary connection, his great parliamentary interest, will not alone explain this extraordinary fact. His success is a signal instance of what may be effected by a man who devotes his whole heart and soul without reserve to one object. He was eaten up by ambition. His love of influence and authority resembled the avarice of the old usurer in the "Fortunes of Nigel." It was so intense a passion that it supplied the place of talents, that it inspired even fatuity with cunning. "Have no money dealings with my father," says Martha to Lord Glenvarloch! "for, dotard as he is, he will make an ass of you." It was as dangerous to have any political connection with Newcastle as to buy and sell with old Trapbois. He was greedy after power with a greediness all his own. He was jealous of all his colleagues, and even of his own brother. Under the disguise of levity he was false beyond all example of political falsehood. All the able men of his time ridiculed him as a dunce, a driveller, a child who never knew his own mind for an hour together; and he overreached them all round.

If the country had remained at peace, it is not impossible that this man would have continued at the head of affairs without admitting any other person to a share of his authority until the throne was filled by a new Prince, who brought with him new maxims

of Government, new favourites, and a strong will. But the inauspicious commencement of the Seven Years' War brought on a crisis to which Newcastle was altogether unequal. After a calm of fifteen years the spirit of the nation was again stirred to its inmost depths. In a few days the whole aspect of the political world was changed.

But that change is too remarkable an event to be discussed at the end of an article already more than sufficiently long. It is probable that we may, at no remote time, resume the subject.







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